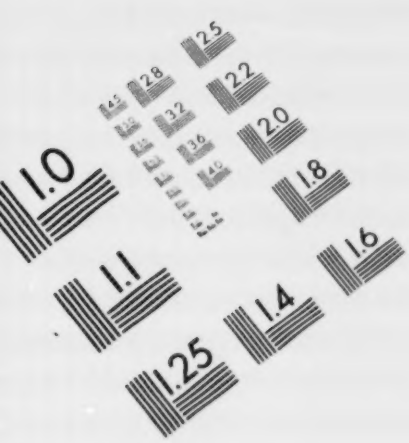

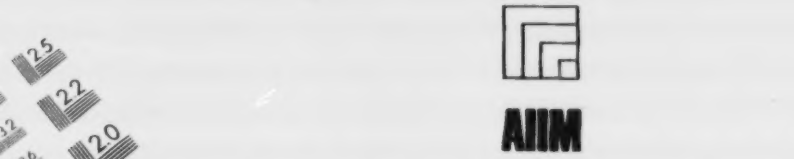

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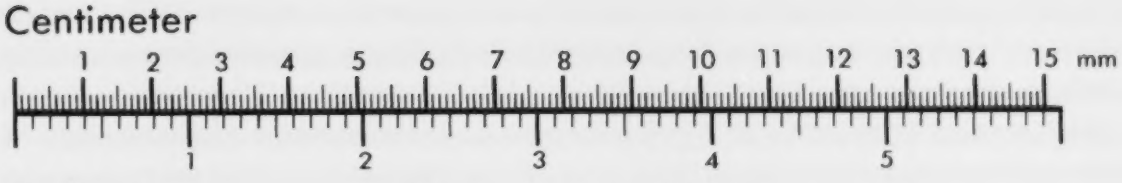

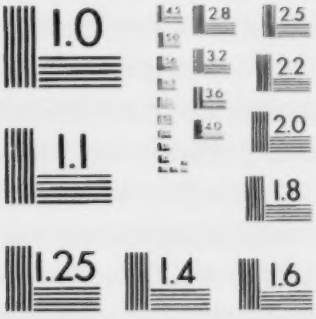

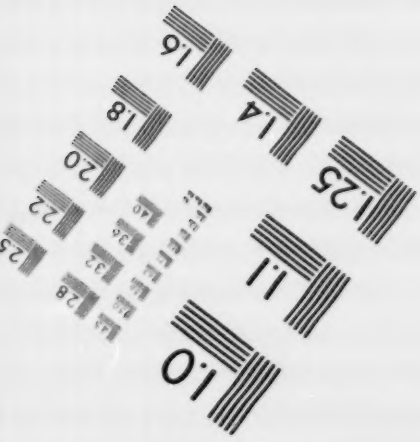

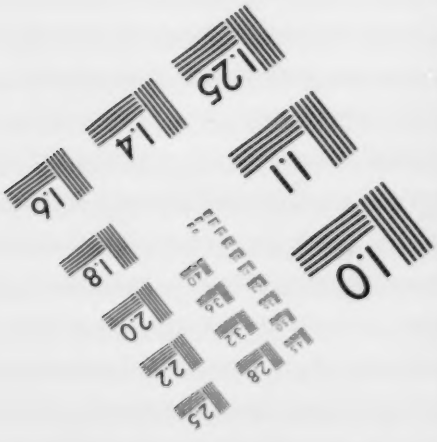

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ABSTRACT

The Indicators Project on Education Organizing was designed to examine the role of community organizing in school reform. For over 2 years, researchers documented the education organizing of five urban groups. This report presents an education organizing indicators framework that highlights strategies and accomplishments of education organizing. It describes eight indicator areas: leadership development, community power, social capital, public accountability, equity, school-community connection, positive school climate, and high quality curriculum and instruction. It also describes a theory of change that shows how the work of community organizing groups creates a process that leads from increased community capacity to improved student learning. Seven chapters are (1) "Introduction"; (2) "The Problem and What You Will Learn"; (3) "The Education Organizing Indicators Framework"; (4) "The Change Process"; (5) "Making Sense of the Variation in Community Organizing"; (6) "The Added Value of Community Organizing to School Reform"; and (7) "Challenges and Recommendations for Extending and Supporting the Work of Community Organizing." Five appendices present the five case study groups, a map showing locations of community organizing groups, charts showing characteristics of the 19 telephone survey groups, the Indicators Project National Advisory Board, and the education organizing indicators framework. (SM)

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PREPARED BY RESEARCH FOR ACTION

Successful Community Organizing
for School Reform

Strong Neighborhood Strong Schools

The Indicators Project on Education Organizing

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Successful Community Organizing for School Reform

Prepared by

RESEARCH FOR ACTION
Eva Gold and Elaine Simon

with

CROSS CITY CAMPAIGN FOR URBAN SCHOOL REFORM
Chris Brown

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Strong Neighborhoods Strong Schools

The Indicators Project on Education Organizing

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The Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform initiated this project and numerous Cross City staff have contributed to this study. Anne Hallett conceived the project and led the planning committee. She and Lupe Prieto went on several site visits and have read and commented on drafts of reports. Cross City interns Jessica Tai, Jodi Newman, Brianne Testa, and Kelly Hallberg gathered information for the data base of community organizing groups, and David Hayes provided the technical know-how to set it up on the Cross City website. Muriel Jackson, Joanne Cloonan, and Eva Moon have provided critical editing support.

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Forward

Many educators say that they cannot do the work of educating children alone, particularly low- and moderate-income children and children of color. Unfortunately, there are few mechanisms that allow parents and community members in low-income neighborhoods to play a meaningful role in the education of their children. For many people involved in education, parent participation is not seen as important or meaningful. As Lucy Ruiz, a parent and an organizer with the Alliance Organizing Project in Philadelphia put it, "Parents are seen as the pretzel sellers." The common viewpoint is that parents are seen as the people who drop their kids off at school, conduct fundraisers, and occasionally volunteer time in a classroom. Community organizing seeks to change that dynamic.

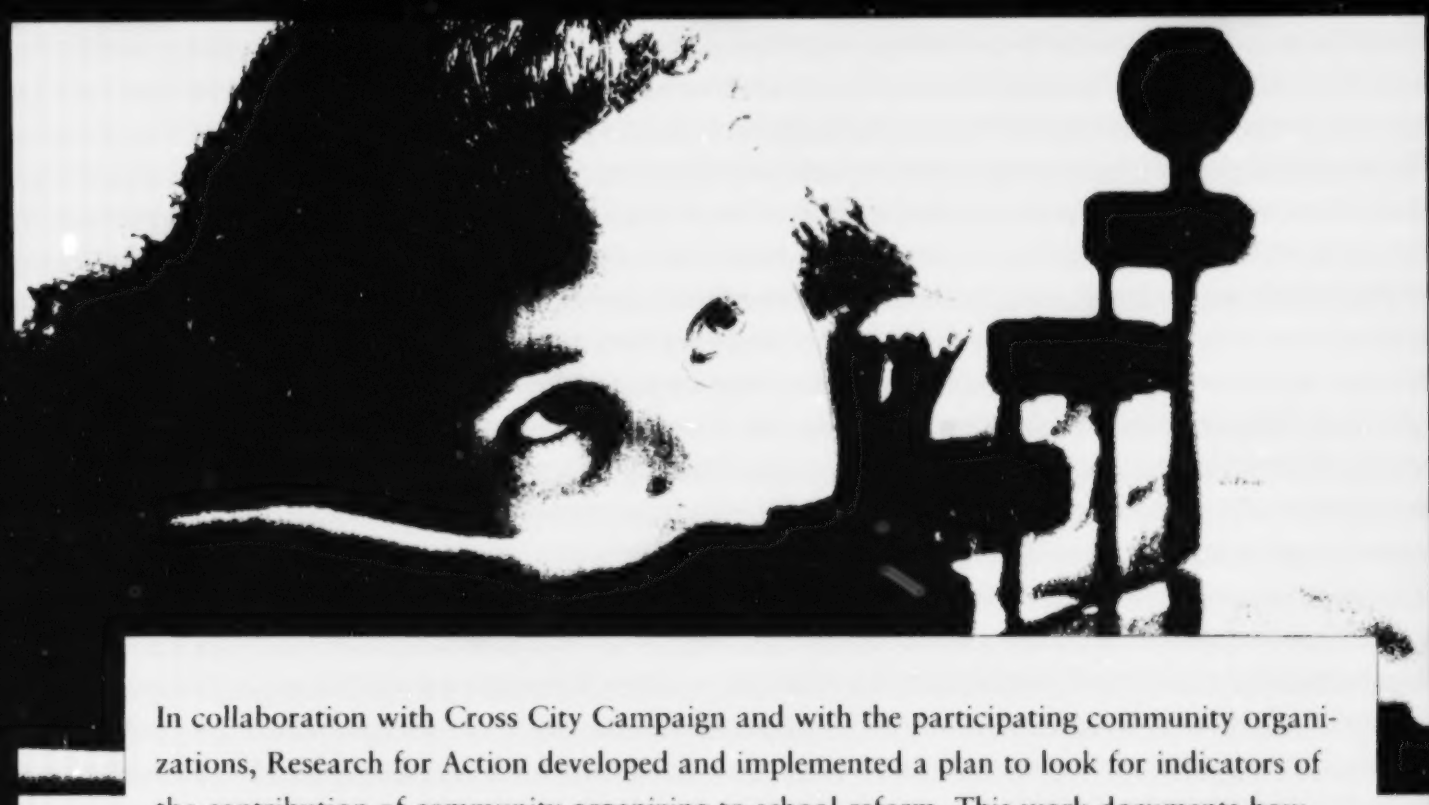
The Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform is a nine-city network of school reform leaders working to transform public education to ensure that it serves all children and prepares them to be citizens, earners, and life-long learners. While the members of the Cross City Campaign approach the work of school reform from many different perspectives, their experience has shown them that organized parents and community members are essential to the reform process. At base, organizing brings together a group of people who are concerned about an issue and mobilizes them to take action. Organizing is about building power for people who are powerless and whose lives are negatively impacted by the decisions of others. Although the Cross City Campaign believes in the importance of organized parents and community in the school change process, the challenge is to make a persuasive case for the impact of this kind of involvement.

The Indicators Project on Education Organizing was designed to make such a case for the roles and results of community organizing in reforming schools and in improving student learning. In the fall of 1997, the Cross City Campaign convened a meeting called Building Bridges (a published report on this meeting is available from the Cross City Campaign). The goal of the meeting was to build connections between organizers and funders around school change. Meeting participants agreed that organizing contributed in significant ways to improving schools and children's learning, but there was much debate about whether it was possible to measure the contribution of organizing. A small group of organizers and funders formed a planning group to explore the possibility of developing credible ways to document the impact of community organizing on education. We wanted to know what indicates that education organizing is making a difference. We also wanted to know what support community organizations needed to continue and expand their work. This project enabled us to examine the value:

Community organizing is essential to initiate, develop, and sustain long-term, dynamic school reform.

That is how the Indicators Project was born.

The Cross City Campaign issued a request for proposals and selected as its research partner Research for Action (RFA), a Philadelphia-based, non-profit research organization specializing in education and parent involvement issues (more information on both organizations is on page 60). RFA has a long history of engaging in action research and is well known for its participatory approach to research.



In collaboration with Cross City Campaign and with the participating community organizations, Research for Action developed and implemented a plan to look for indicators of the contribution of community organizing to school reform. This work documents how organized groups of people acting collectively bring about significant change at the local school, the community, the district, and the state. It has resulted in the development of an Education Organizing Indicators Framework that funders, educators, and organizers themselves can use.

The framework will help funders to understand the ways communities organize to improve their local schools. It can help integrate the usually separate work of the community organizing/development and education "wings" within a foundation. For community organizers, parents, and community leaders the framework will help to legitimize and strengthen their work and connect them with successful models from which they can learn. Educators will understand the roles that community organizing groups play in advocating for and supporting school reform.

In addition to the research, the Indicators Project contains other elements as well. During the project, organizers and leaders from each of the participating organizations visited each other's sites to get a better sense of how different groups were approaching the field. The Cross City Campaign has convened several meetings over the course of the project to bring together organizers, parents, community members, funders, educators, and others to discuss the work of education organizing and make plans to move the work forward. As a result of the research and the opportunity for participating organizations to reflect on their work, the Cross City Campaign believes that the Indicators Project has the power to change forever the way people view parent participation. ANNE C. HALLETT AND CHRIS BROWN

I. Introduction

The Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA), a 40-year old community organization, turned its attention to education in 1988, when the Chicago School Reform Act opened up the opportunity for increased parent and community involvement in local schools. A few years later, LSNA members began a campaign for new facilities to relieve school overcrowding. Their efforts have resulted, to date, in the construction of five elementary school annexes and two middle schools. In the course of the campaigns for new schools, LSNA developed strong relationships with principals and teachers that led them to collaborate in the development of the Parent Mentor program.

The Parent Mentor program has trained over 840 parents in leadership skills and brought them into classrooms where they provide extra social and academic help to children. Teachers have come to appreciate the participation of parents in the classroom for a variety of reasons, including more individualized student attention, better parent-teacher communication, and new insights into the Logan Square neighborhood. With the increased presence of parents in schools, school climates are becoming more orderly and respectful. Parents trained as mentors are playing a major role in a neighborhood-wide literacy initiative. In the last five years, all LSNA elementary schools have experienced significant increases in student achievement. Teachers, principals, and parents credit the Parent Mentor program for the gains. In addition, Parent Mentor graduates have been key actors in developing family-focused community centers at LSNA schools and in leading the fight against gentrification and maintaining Logan Square as a mixed-income neighborhood.

Across the country, community organizing groups like LSNA are working in low- to moderate-income communities, turning their attention to improving public education for their constituents. They work at the neighborhood and policy levels to address the range of issues urban public schools face—such as overcrowding, deteriorating facilities, inadequate funding, high turnover of staff, lack of up-to-date textbooks, and children who perform below grade level. Students attending these schools too often are shut out of high quality programs, discouraged from going to college, and shortchanged in their employment opportunities.

In the decade that community organizing for school reform has taken hold and spread, community groups have begun to address these issues and to see their efforts pay off. For more than two years, a partnership of the Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform and Research for Action documented the education organizing activities of five groups from across the country: the Alliance Organizing Project (Philadelphia, PA); Austin Interfaith (Austin, TX); Logan Square Neighborhood Association (Chicago, IL); New York ACORN (New York, NY); and Oakland Community Organizations (Oakland, CA). (See Appendix A for a brief description of each group.) Our purpose was to develop a way to show the accomplishments of community organizing and explain how their accomplishments lead to improving schools and student achievement. Detailed case studies are available on these sites in a companion volume to this report.

In this report, we provide a methodology for understanding the contributions of community organizing to school reform. We present an Education Organizing Indicators Framework that identifies the strategies and accomplishments of education organizing and a Theory of Change that describes how the work of community organizing groups creates a process that leads from increased community capacity to improved student learning. We show that when school reform goes hand-in-hand with building strong communities, the institution of schooling itself changes fundamentally, increasing the chances that reform efforts will be carried out and sustained.

Our examination of the groups in this study revealed that their efforts are bringing new resources to schools with the highest need, improving school climate, and creating better conditions for teaching and learning. Nonetheless, within the discourse of school reform, their accomplishments remain largely unacknowledged, while the families in these low-income communities continue to be characterized as lacking in the skills and values necessary to support their children's education. It is the discourse of deficit that this research challenges. When school staff, parents, and community engage in a democratic decision-making process,

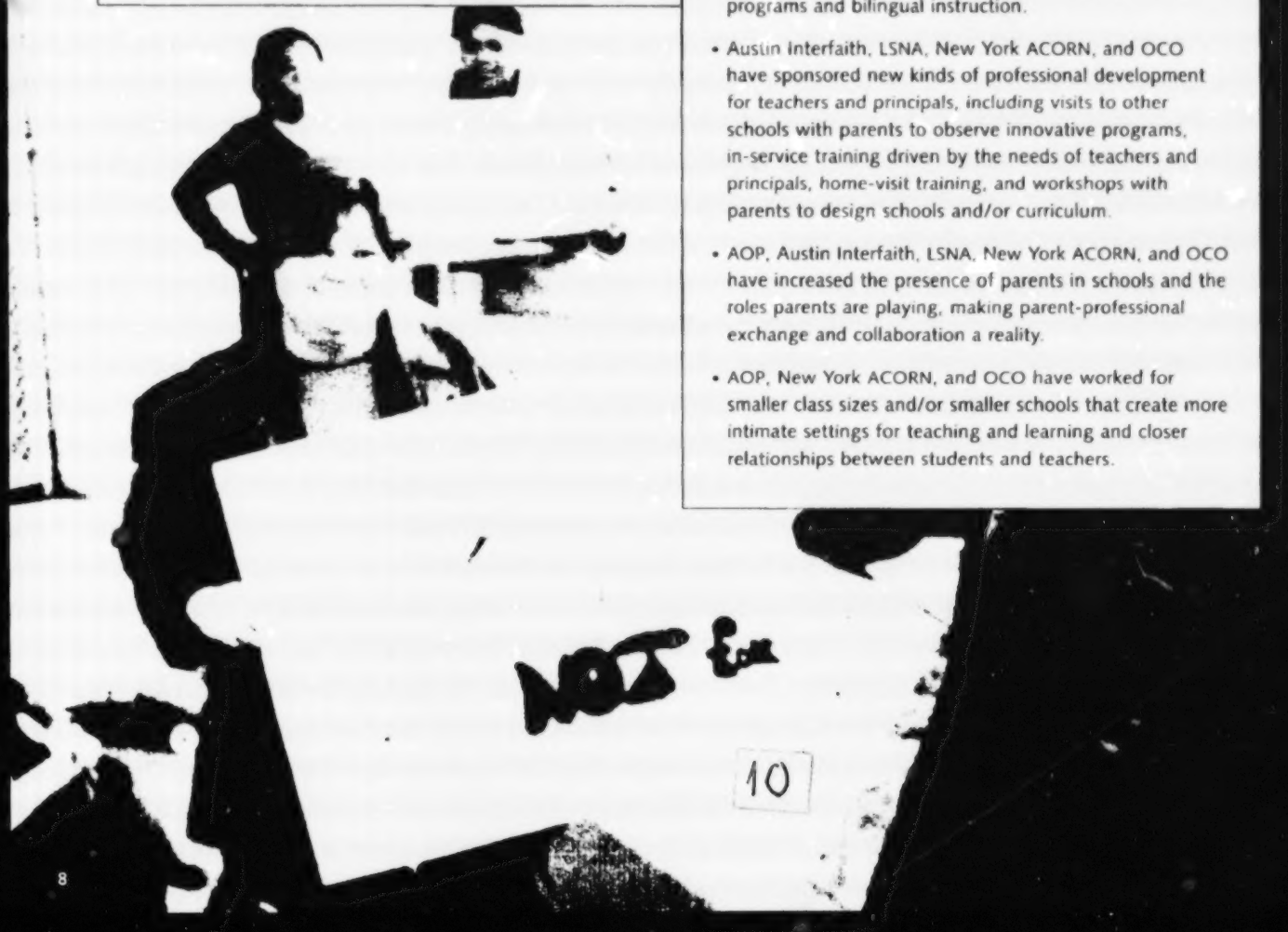
they develop a sense of joint ownership of local schools. Our research also shows the value of voices external to schools and school systems in creating the political will necessary for them to change. When teachers value the knowledge parents and community members bring to children's learning, they can design challenging and sensitive curriculum. In this report, we show that community organizing is an effective vehicle for building community capacity and plays a critical role in school reform.

"How come because we live in a lower income neighborhood do we have to get less? Our children have to drink out of lead fountains; our kids got to play in dirt. We don't have music lessons; we don't get gym until the second half of the year. But if you travel up the road to one of these prestigious schools, their kids [have these things]. But not mine."

PARENT LEADER, AOP, PHILADELPHIA

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE FIVE GROUPS

- Austin Interfaith and OCO have redirected city bonds to benefit schools in low-income neighborhoods. In Oakland, a $300 million bond issue is now contributing to construction of new small schools.
- AOP, Austin Interfaith, LSNA, New York ACORN, and OCO obtained district and/or city allocations for facility improvements and/or after-school programs that provide academic enrichment. Austin Interfaith was instrumental in gaining funds to establish after-school programs in 28 schools.
- LSNA, New York ACORN, and OCO have leveraged funding to build new schools and facilities in overcrowded districts. LSNA organizing won five new annexes at elementary schools and two new middle schools and New York ACORN has opened three new high schools.
- AOP and Austin Interfaith have increased school safety by obtaining more crossing guards, better lighting, and improved traffic patterns in school areas. AOP won an increase in funding for 37 additional traffic guards.
- Austin Interfaith has negotiated district policies that open access for low-income students to challenging academic programs and bilingual instruction.
- Austin Interfaith, LSNA, New York ACORN, and OCO have sponsored new kinds of professional development for teachers and principals, including visits to other schools with parents to observe innovative programs, in-service training driven by the needs of teachers and principals, home-visit training, and workshops with parents to design schools and/or curriculum.
- AOP, Austin Interfaith, LSNA, New York ACORN, and OCO have increased the presence of parents in schools and the roles parents are playing, making parent-professional exchange and collaboration a reality.
- AOP, New York ACORN, and OCO have worked for smaller class sizes and/or smaller schools that create more intimate settings for teaching and learning and closer relationships between students and teachers.



Organization of the Report

We begin this report by identifying the limitations to date of school reform, which relies on professional educators and system-driven efforts. We argue that community organizing offers a promising approach that addresses these limitations and that is consistent with an emerging paradigm of school reform that connects communities and schools.

In the second section, we document the work of community organizing for school reform through an Education Organizing Indicators Framework, eight indicator areas in which community organizing groups work for school change. We discuss our methods for identifying the indicator areas and how the indicator areas can be used to document the accomplishments of community organizing.

Following this discussion of the indicator areas, the next section provides an explanation of how the indicator areas work together in a change process that leads from community capacity building to improved student learning. A detailed story of education organizing at one site illustrates the theory of change.

In the section that follows the explanation of the theory of change, we describe what contributes to variation in education organizing strategies and goals across settings, drawing on all five case study groups. Then we turn to the value community organizing adds to school reform efforts.

We end the report with the challenges facing community organizing for school reform and recommendations for supporting and expanding the work community organizing groups are doing.

"I don't have a degree, but I've been going to school all this time. I've learned new approaches to curriculum, I've met wonderful people with a wealth of knowledge, and here I am—this little person from East Austin. How many people have the opportunities to learn from these people that ordinarily you have to go to college to be near? I wouldn't have. I even got to go to Harvard. So the organization has shared and given me a lot."

AUSTIN INTERFAITH LEADER

II. The Problem and What You Will Learn

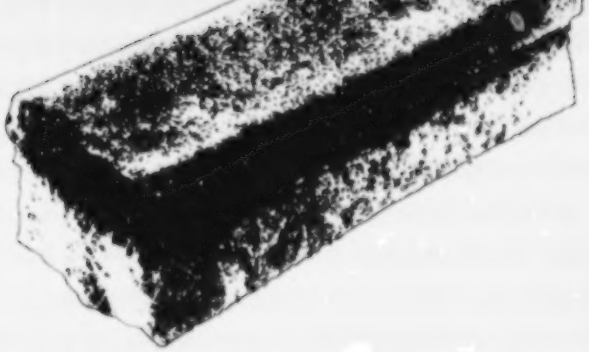
By almost any measure, urban public schools are failing to provide an adequate education to their students. Such indicators of school well-being as student achievement, promotion rates, and retention of teachers have all continued to decline relative to suburban and more affluent areas. The job of improving schools has been left primarily to professional educators and the education policy community. Yet the persistence of urban school failure has confounded the professionals, as well as civic leaders and government officials. It is in this context of the widening disparity between the education schools can provide and what most urban public schools actually do provide that low- to moderate-income urban residents have turned to community organizing to make schools work for their children.

The prevailing belief is that transforming schools and improving student performance is beyond the scope of community organizations. Despite the accomplishments of community organizing groups in improving schools, their work is largely invisible. One reason is, many educators see urban communities as part of the problem. Secondly, public officials and professional educators who actually carry out the programs, for which the community organizing groups campaigned, end up receiving the credit.[1] In addition, operating in the professional paradigm of schools, those who make policy for and run public schools often discount the insights of parents and community members because they lack education credentials—especially when it comes to what goes on in the classroom.[2]

NOTES

1. Stein, Arlene. "Between Organization and Movement: ACORN and the Alinsky Model of Community Organizing." In *Berkeley Journal of Sociology: A Critical Review.* XXXI: 1986.

2. Michael Katz, "Chicago School Reform as History," *Teachers College Record,* (94:1), 1992, pp. 56-72; David Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974. Katz and Tyack, both historians of education, have chronicled the ascendance of professionals and bureaucratic structure in American schooling. In this model, the public role in education is limited to selecting a school board or in some cases only to electing the mayor. Self-reinforcing credentialing systems have grown up around this system to legitimize those who have gained these credentials and to keep out anyone who has not.



"We didn't want 'chalk and talk'. We wanted children to interact with each other and an integrated curriculum.... We wanted to hear noise in our classrooms, because that would mean that the children were discussing the material." NEW YORK ACORN LEADER

A New Paradigm

A growing body of research on the problems of urban education and the failure of reform, however, points to the importance of connecting communities and schools. Most of these studies still reflect the professional paradigm that defines the domains of community and school as essentially separate and limits the role of parents to serving the priorities of professionals. For example, the work on "parent involvement" points to the value of parents as partners to professional educators, reinforcing teachers' work in activities such as reading to children at home, showing an interest in children's school achievement, providing enrichment activities, and volunteering in school.[3] Similarly, "community involvement" is generally conceived of as marshalling support services for low-income families, so that their children are ready to learn.[4] Another strand, generally referred to as "parent engagement," acknowledges the contribution of parents and community members in supporting policy initiatives devised by professional educators.[5]

In the last two decades, this discussion of the relationship between communities and schools has begun to shift the professional paradigm, describing ways that parents and community members contribute to school change and to children's learning.[6] Those who study school change have noted that the insularity of schools and their tendency to be self-reinforcing systems is one reason why they are so resistant to reform. As one noted observer writes, "the more things change, the more they stay the same." He has argued that there needs to be a culture change that makes school boundaries more permeable to parents and community.[7] Another authority on school change similarly supports the need for permeable boundaries, calling for "deep internal collaboration" to work in conjunction with "deep outside collaboration" in order for schools to have the resources and capacity to make and sustain change.[8]

NOTES

3. Joyce Epstein, "School/Family/Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share," *Phi Delta Kappan*, (76:9), 1995, pp. 701-712 which creates a typology of parents as partners. Catherine Snow, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1998; Jean S. Chall and Catherine Snow, "Families and literacy: The contributions of out of school experiences to children's acquisition of literacy," *The Harvard Families and Literacy Project Final Report*, Washington, DC: National Institute of Education, 1982. Anne T. Henderson and Nancy Berla, (Eds.) *A New Generation of Evidence: the Family is Critical to Student Achievement*, Washington, DC: The Center for Law and Education, 1994.

4. Don Davies, P. Burch, & V.R. Johnson, "Policies to increase family-community involvement." *Equity and Choice*, (8:3), 1992, pp 48-51; Joy G. Dryfoos, *Full-Service Schools: A Revolution in Health and Social Services for Children, Youth and Families*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1994.

5. The Annenberg Institute for School Reform calls the work it does on school/community connections Public Engagement and publishes a newsletter entitled, *Public Engagement Today*. These and many other publications and initiatives see parent engagement as a way to build public support for public education.

6. Clarence N. Stone, "Civic Capacity and Urban Education," 2001, unpublished manuscript, http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/stone/proio.html

7. Seymour B. Sarason, *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change*, Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1982 (second edition); Sarason, *The Predicatable Failure of Educational Reform*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1990.

8. Michael Fullan, *Change Forces: The Sequel*, Falmer Press: Philadelphia, 1999.

Others in the new paradigm that links schools and communities have shown the contribution to students' success when schools value the knowledge and skills of parents and community members. Researchers who have looked at the role of culture in schooling have pointed to how local knowledge can enrich curriculum and pedagogy.[9] Sociologists and political scientists have applied the concept of social capital to education and noted that strong local culture and community solidarity support children's sense of identity and buoy up their educational and career aspirations.[10] Research on Chicago school reform's democratic localism, where parents and community members have an equal role with educators in school decision-making, demonstrates the contribution of such participation to curriculum and instruction and to raising student achievement.[11]

This study of community organizing for school reform strengthens the arguments for connecting communities and schools. It supports the assertion that change will neither come about nor be sustained unless there is authentic parent and community engagement in reform.[12] Our work also contributes to research on how valuing community knowledge affects pedagogy and student learning. Finally, it supports and shows the process by which democratization of schools contributes to fundamental changes in teaching and learning and in the nature of the school community that ultimately leads to higher student achievement.

Studying community organizing helped us link these arguments and develop a theory of change that identifies the pathways of influence that lead from community change to school change and increased student achievement. Looking for indicators that would make the work of community organizing visible led to identifying a set of indicator "areas"

NOTES

9. Luis C. Moll, C. Amanti, D. Neff & N. Gonzalez, "Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative Approach to Connect Homes and Classrooms, *Theory into Practice*, (XXXI:2), 1992, pp.132-141; Concha Delgado-Gaitan, "Traditions and Transitions in the Learning Process of Mexican Children: An Ethnographic View," In George S. and L. Spindler (Eds.), *Interpretive Ethnography of Education At Home and Abroad*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1987, pp. 333-359; Beverly McConnell, "Education as a Cultural Process: The Interaction Between Community and Classroom in Fostering Learning," In Jo Beth Allen & J.M. Mason (Eds.), *Risk Makers, Risk Takers, Risk Breakers: Reducing the Risks for Young Literacy Learners*, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1989, pp. 201-221; Katherine Au, "Participation in structures in a reading lesson with Hawaiian children: Analysis of a culturally appropriate instructional event." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, (11:2), 1980 pp. 91-115; Shirley Brice Heath, *Ways With Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

10. Joseph Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital." *American Journal of Sociology*, (94: Supplement), 1988, pp. S95-S120; Alejandro Portes and R.G. Rumbaut, Legacies: *The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001; Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2000.

11. Anthony S. Bryk, P. Sebring, D. Kerbow, S. Rollow, and J.Q. Easton. *Charting Chicago School Reform: Democratic Localism as a Lever for Change*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. (1998): Designs for Change, *What Makes These Schools Stand Out? Chicago elementary schools with a seven-year trend of improved reading achievement*, Chicago, 1998.

12. Gary L. Anderson, "Toward authentic participation: Deconstructing the discourses of participatory reforms in education. *American Educational Research Journal*, (35:4), 1998, pp.571-603; Hollyce C. Giles, "Parent Engagement as a School Reform Strategy," *ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education Digest*, (135), 1998, http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/digests/dig135.html

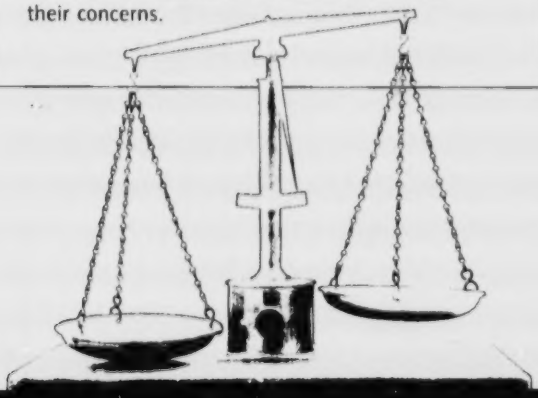
through which it is possible to document the contribution of community organizing to education reform. In the next section, we introduce the indicator areas and discuss how to use them.

Change will neither come about nor be sustained unless there is authentic parent and community engagement in reform.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform and Research for Action, along with the New York University's Institute for Education and Social Policy and its research partners, have identified more than 200 groups nationwide engaged in community organizing for school reform. (A map of these groups is in Appendix B. A data base that provides information about the 140 groups identified by Research for Action and the Cross City Campaign is available on the Cross City Campaign Website, www.crosscity.org). Below is a summary of criteria used to distinguish community organizing groups from other kinds of community-based groups working with parents for school reform, such as legal aid groups, parent volunteer groups, advocacy groups, social services, and cultural groups.

- They work to change public schools to make them more equitable and effective for all students.
- They build a large base of members who take collective action to further their agenda.
- They build relationships and collective responsibility by identifying shared concerns among neighborhood residents and creating alliances and coalitions that cross neighborhood and institutional boundaries.
- They develop leadership among community residents to carry out agendas that the membership determines through a democratic governance structure.
- They use the strategies of adult education, civic participation, public action, and negotiation to build power for residents of low- to moderate-income communities that results in action to address their concerns.



III. The Education Organizing Indicators Framework

Our charge at the outset of this study was to identify indicators of the impact of community organizing for school reform. In reviewing past work on indicators, we determined that establishing indicators is not a first step. The starting point is a conceptual framework that specifies categories or "domains" of impact. How researchers arrive at the categories varies, but indicators studies use three types of approaches, often in concert—convening stakeholders, conducting empirical research, and drawing on existing studies in the literature. In some cases, the researchers convene a set of stakeholders to identify elements they associate with a particular status as well as what constitutes satisfactory progress. For example, an indicators project aimed at measuring "quality of life" in Jacksonville, Florida used a committee of volunteers to articulate a vision for the city, then designed indicators to reflect the vision. They came up with 74 indicator areas—public safety, health, social environment, and so forth. Then they identified potential data sources. Sources included existing data and data that would be collected through citizen surveys.

In other instances, indicators are empirically derived. These take the form of evaluation and documentation studies that aim to understand the processes and relationships between program strategies and outcomes. Still other indicator projects draw on existing empirical studies that have made the connection between particular indicators and desired goals. For example, the authors of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Kids Count* were interested in children's health and well-being. They identified research that associated these outcomes with a set of factors—including family structure and visits to the doctor—and created indicators based on those associations.

We used a combination of these strategies to develop the indicator areas applicable to community organizing for school reform. Ultimately, we identified eight indicator areas—broad categories that describe the work of education organizing and in which accomplishments can be identified. We developed a first set of indicator areas through telephone interviews with 19 groups across the country, based on questions that we asked about their organizing and about what they considered to be evidence that their work was making a difference. (See Appendix C for charts that give an

overview of the 19 groups.) The indicator areas also reflect our review of literature on school improvement and community development. Research at the five case study sites provided us with opportunities to inquire further and to refine the indicator areas, through interviews with group members and organizers as well as with other stakeholders in the setting, including superintendents; teachers; principals; school board members; political, civic, and business leaders; and members of other community based groups. A national advisory group of academics, funders, educators, and organizers also gave input. (See Appendix D for a list of the national advisory group members.) As with other indicator studies, we derived indicators from our observations in the sites, by eliciting them from stakeholders, and from the literature that linked them to important outcomes.

Below the eight indicator areas are listed with definitions. These definitions come from our analysis of the work of the groups and represent the range of their activities within each indicator area. Together, the indicator areas make up the Education Organizing Indicators Framework, which illustrates the range and variety of accomplishments we found in each area.

DEFINITIONS OF THE INDICATOR AREAS

Leadership Development builds the knowledge and skills of parents and community members (and sometimes teachers, principals, and students) to create agendas for school improvement. Leadership development is personally empowering, as parents and community members take on public roles. Leaders heighten their civic participation and sharpen their skills in leading meetings, interviewing public officials, representing the community at public events and with the media, and negotiating with those in power.

Community Power means that residents of low-income neighborhoods gain influence to win the resources and policy changes needed to improve their schools and neighborhoods. Community power emerges when groups act strategically and collectively. Powerful community groups build a large base of constituents, form partnerships for legitimacy and expertise, and have the clout to draw the attention of political leaders and the media to their agenda.

Social Capital refers to networks of mutual obligation and trust, both interpersonal and inter-group that can be activated to leverage resources to address community concerns. Some groups call this "relational" power, while others describe this process as one of building "political capital." Beginning with relationships among neighborhood residents and within local institutions, community organizing groups bring together people who might not otherwise associate with each other, either because of cultural and language barriers (e.g. Latinos, African-Americans, and Asian-Americans) or because of their different roles and positions, such as teachers, school board members, and parents. Creating settings for these "bridging relationships" in which issues are publicly discussed is the key to moving a change agenda forward.

Public Accountability entails a broad acknowledgement of and commitment to solving the problems of public education. It is built on the assumption that public education is a collective responsibility. Community organizing groups work to create public settings for differently positioned school stakeholders—educators, parents, community members, elected and other public officials, the private and non-profit sectors, and students themselves—to identify problems and develop solutions for improving schools in low- to moderate-income communities. Through this public process, community organizing groups hold officials accountable to respond to the needs of low- to moderate-income communities.

Equity guarantees that all children, regardless of socio-economic status, race, or ethnicity, have the resources and opportunities they need to become strong learners, to achieve in school, and to succeed in the work world. Often, providing equitable opportunities requires more than equalizing the distribution of resources. Community organizing groups push for resource allocation that takes into account poverty and neglect, so that schools in low-income areas receive priority. In addition, groups work to increase the access of students from these schools to strong academic programs.

School/Community Connection requires that schools become institutions that work with parents and the community to educate children. Such institutional change requires that professionals value the skills and knowledge of community members. In this model, parents and local residents serve as resources for schools and schools extend their missions to become community centers offering the educational, social service, and recreational programs local residents need and desire.

High Quality Instruction and Curriculum indicate classroom practices that provide challenging learning opportunities that also reflect the values and goals of parents and the community. Community organizing groups work to create high expectations for all children and to provide professional development for teachers to explore new ideas, which may include drawing on the local community's culture and involving parents as active partners in their children's education.

Positive School Climate is a basic requirement for teaching and learning. It is one in which teachers feel they know their students and families well, and in which there is mutual respect and pride in the school. Community organizing groups often begin their organizing for school improvement by addressing safety in and around the school and the need for improved facilities. Reducing school and class size is another way in which community organizing groups seek to create positive school climates.

Understanding the Education Organizing Indicators Framework

The Education Organizing Indicators Framework is a set of charts that describes the work of education organizing in each of the indicator areas through its primary strategies, along with the results these strategies are yielding, and potential data sources for documenting the results. The Framework is a synthesis of charts we made for each case study site in each of the indicator areas. The Education Organizing Indicators Framework appears in Appendix E. As an example, below we have excerpted from the chart on Equity. In each indicator area we have listed three to five primary strategies that community organizing groups use and a few specific examples. Here we use one primary strategy and set of examples to demonstrate how to read the chart.

In the column on the left, in bold, is a primary strategy that community organizing uses to address equity: **Increase funding and resources to under-resourced schools.** Beneath this strategy are three examples of the ways in which community organizing groups are working to increase funding and resources.

In Appendix E, along with the charts for each indicator area, we describe what we have learned about how to apply the Education Organizing Indicators Framework, including cautions against using it piecemeal or out of context.

Education organizing groups work in all eight indicator areas in this Framework. The Framework offers organizing groups a means to explain their work as a set of strategies aimed toward specific goals in each indicator area. They can review their accomplishments in light of this set of discrete areas of work in order to continue to refine their strategies. In a parallel manner, funders and educators can use the Framework to decipher from their own observations the rationale and results of education organizing.

The danger of an indicators approach is oversimplification. By separating and naming parts of a complex process, it is easy to isolate the elements, missing the complexity and inter-relationships among the indicator areas. The risk of doing this is increased by the fact that the many players in school reform emphasize or value indicator areas differently. We refer to the set of indicator areas as a framework to emphasize the importance of seeing them as a whole.

Another criticism of indicators is that they do not explain the pathways of influence that connect the results within indicator areas to ultimate goals.[13]

NOTES

13. David S. Sawicki, and P. Flynn. "Neighborhood indicators: a review of the literature and an assessment of conceptual and methodological issues." In *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Spring 1996. V62 n2, p 165 (19).

Equity

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
Increase funding and resources to under-resourced schools	
• Campaigns for new buildings and renovations to reduce overcrowding and increase safety • Make the case for and win allocation of funds for adult education and after-school programs • Write grants to raise private and public funds for schools and/or reform groups to provide teacher professional development.	• New school facilities, buildings, and annexes • Increased money for lighting, crossing guards, playgrounds, etc. • Increased professional development opportunities for teachers
DATA SOURCES	
• School District facilities and personnel budgets • Neighborhood/city/District crime incident reports	• Grant proposals • Survey of school buildings and related facilities • Survey of parents and teachers • School schedules and programs

Although the Framework provides a means for documenting the results of community organizing, it does not explain how the indicator areas work together toward the goal of improving schools. Based on analysis of our observations of education organizing in the case study sites, we developed a theory of change that explains how each indicator area contributes to improved student learning and describes a change process by which community organizing leads to improved schools and stronger student achievement. Based on analysis of our observations of education organizing in the case study sites, we developed a theory of change that explains how each indicator area contributes to improved student learning and describes a change process by which community organizing leads to improved schools and stronger student achievement, in turn strengthening the community. In the next section we present the theory of change.

IV. The Change Process

The work of community organizing groups in each of the eight indicator areas is important, but the outcomes that are most important to everyone from parents to politicians are those related to students and their school achievement. Stories of community organizing for school reform should create confidence that ultimately student learning will improve. To investigate the relationship between the indicator areas and improving student learning, we returned to each of the five case study sites to follow up selected education organizing stories.[14] From analysis of these stories, we developed a theory of change that shows how community organizing builds community capacity that leads to improving schools and higher student achievement. On the following page is a model of the theory of change that underlies the work of community organizing for school reform.

On the far right of the model are the indicator areas, *high quality instruction and curriculum* and *positive school climate*, both strongly associated with school improvement. High quality instruction and curriculum connote classrooms where teaching is content rich, academically rigorous, and where students are engaged.[15] Positive school climate is evidenced through well-maintained facilities and a social environment characterized by orderliness, safety, low incidence of discipline problems, good teacher/student rapport, and respect.[16] These are

NOTES

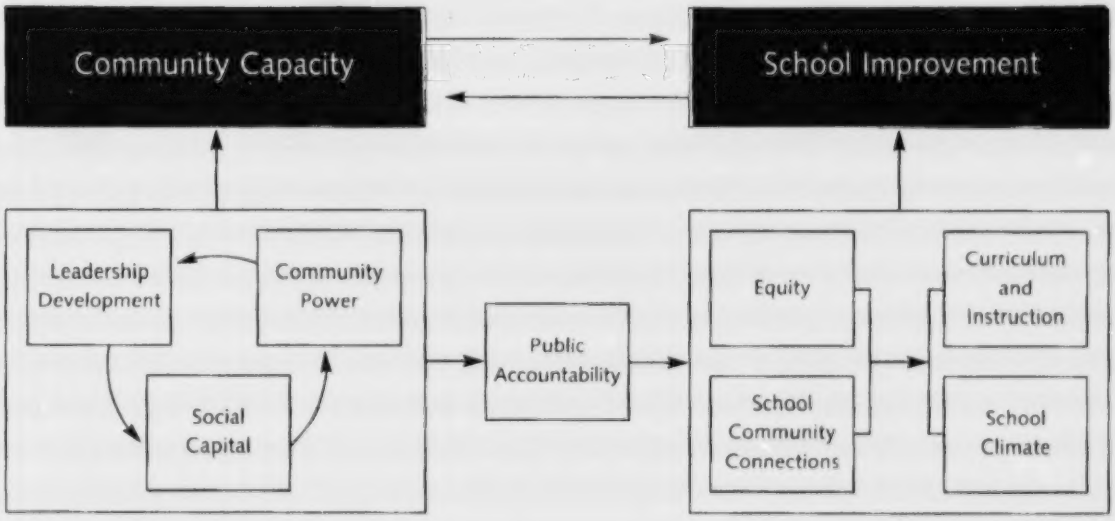
14. In referring to education organizing "stories" we are adopting the language used by community organizing groups for the narratives that describe their campaigns, leadership development, and successes.

15. Fred M. Newmann, W.G. Secada & G.G. Wehlage, *A Guide to Authentic Instruction and Assessment: Vision, Standards and Scoring*, University of Wisconsin: Wisconsin Center for Education Research, 1995.

16. C. Cash, "A Study of the Relationship Between School Building Condition and Student Achievement and Behavior," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blackburg, VA, 1993; T. Corcoran, L. Walker, & J.L. White, *Working in Urban Schools*, Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, DC, 1988; C. Emmons, "The SDP School Climate Survey," School Development Program Newsline, Spring, 1996.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT IS TO SHOW THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING.

Theory of Change: Relationship of Community Capacity Building and School Improvement



The theory of change model shows the pathway of influence between building community capacity and school improvement. Work in three indicator areas—leadership development, community power, and social capital—increases civic participation and leverages power through partnerships and relationships within and across communities, as well as with school district, civic, and elected officials. Public accountability is the hinge that connects community capacity with school improvement. Increased community participation and strong relationships together broaden accountability for improving public education for children of low- to moderate-income families. Public accountability creates the political will to forward equity and school/community connection, thereby improving school climate, curriculum, and instruction making them more responsive to communities, laying the basis for improved student learning and achievement. Stronger schools, in turn, contribute to strengthening community capacity.

indicator areas both directly associated in the research literature with raising student achievement.

The work of community organizing groups represented on the far left of the model under community capacity building—*leadership development, community power* and *social capital*—work interactively to build *public accountability.* Through leadership development, community members learn the skills of civic participation and gain education expertise. They build new relationships and networks that augment social capital by bringing differently positioned stakeholders into public conversations about how to support school success. Through the power of numbers and strategic alliances and actions, community residents are able to bring public officials into accountable relationships for improving schools.

The change process hinges on public accountability. This kind of accountability is the result of commitments made in public that obligate a wide range of stakeholders—parents, educators, community members, officials, and others—to follow through on their promises to improve schools. By broadening accountability for public education, community organizing advances issues of *equity* and *school/community connection* and brings new influences to bear on curriculum and instruction and on school climate. With broad acknowledgement that equity and school/community connection are important goals, resources for schools in low-income areas become more plentiful; schools often turn into centers of the community. Respectful relationships among parents and teachers and students expand ownership for the educational experience of children. Teachers' expectations for children's academic achievement rise as they come to understand community concerns, including parents' interest in their children's education. The potential for curriculum and instruction that is both more rigorous and culturally responsive increases as well.[17]

As noted earlier, some researchers and educators acknowledge the importance of community support and factors external to schools in determining the prospects for reform. Their work, however, does not describe the pathways that connect the community and school domains and lead to students' academic success. Research on Chicago school reform has shown that where schools are open to parent and community participation in decision-making, teachers implement more innovative practices and students do better academically—at least at the elementary level.[18] But Chicago is the only city in the country where state law has devolved power to schools and particularly to parents and community members by creating a well-defined structure for meaningful participation in decision-making through local school councils. Yet even with the legal scaffolding for this kind of participation, community organizing in particular neighborhoods and schools has supported and strengthened the quality of the local school councils.[19] This suggests that it takes more than an institutionalized structure, such as a local school council, for authentic and full participation to occur. The theory of change that we have developed helps to explain how community organizing supports the success of such reform even if it has legal or policy supports.

Interpreting education organizing stories using the Education Organizing Indicators Framework and the theory of change makes visible the unique approach to school reform that community organizing groups are pioneering. Next we relate a story of education organizing that illustrates the theory of change "in action" and shows the accomplishments of the community organizing group in the eight indicator areas.

By broadening public accountability for public education, community organizing advances issues of equity and school/community connection and brings new influences to bear on curriculum and instruction and on school climate.

NOTES

17. Dennis Shirley, *Community Organizing for School Reform,* Austin, TX: University of Texas, 1997; Thomas Hatch, "How community action contributes to achievement," Educational Leadership, (55:8),1998, pp. 16-19. James Comer, "Home-School Relationships as They Affect the Academic Success of Children," *Education and Urban Society,* (16), 1984, pp. 323-337.

18. Bryk, et al., 1998; Designs for Change, 1998.

19. Sharon G. Rollow and A.S. Bryk, "Democratic politics and school improvement: The potential of Chicago reform," In C. Marshal (Ed.), *The New Politics of Race and Gender,* pp. 87-106, London: Falmer Press, 1993.

The Small Schools Campaign in Oakland

When you visit a setting where community organizing is working in education, you will not hear about indicator areas. You will hear about issues in the local community and in the schools. You will hear stories about organizing campaigns and the experiences of leaders, setbacks as well as forward motion, victories that took a long time, and the practices and principles of organizing and how they were applied in a particular case. The story below is about the work of the Oakland Community Organizations (OCO) to win land for new small schools. This neighborhood struggle for land is contributing to the realization of a district-wide small schools reform policy that OCO helped to write and get adopted. It is representative of many stories we heard from all the different sites because it shows how work at the local level is connected to work at the policy level and exemplifies the ways a neighborhood and school are bound together from the vantage point of parents and community members.

In 1986, Montgomery Ward, which operated a mail order warehouse in a low-income Oakland neighborhood for more than half a century, closed down and abandoned its building. By 1993, OCO leaders from one of its member congregations began to hear concerns about the abandoned building from community residents. The empty building was becoming a neighborhood eyesore. Graffiti covered it. The windows were broken. People who lived near the building reported that they heard gunshots coming from the building at night.

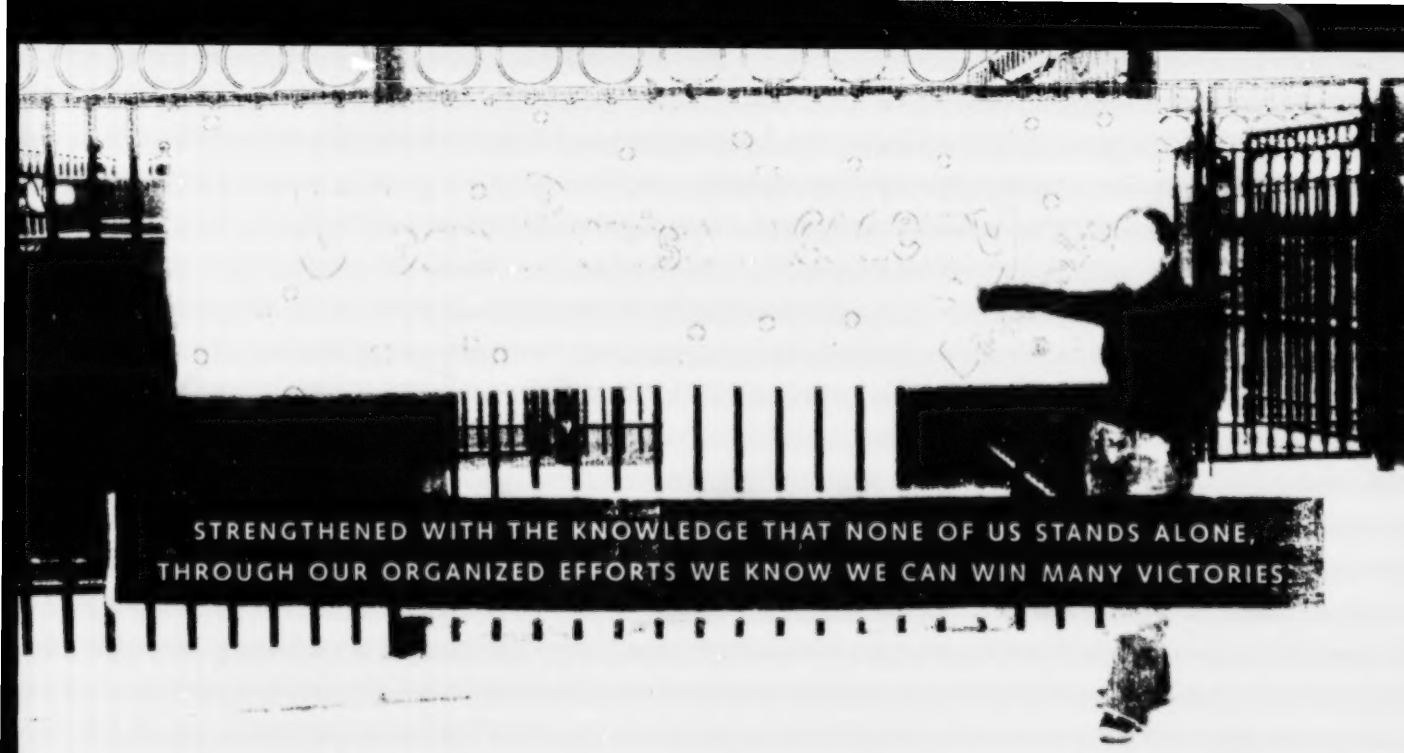
In all the neighborhoods where OCO works, leaders were hearing about parents' concern with school overcrowding. As a result, the OCO Board decided that school overcrowding would be a focus for the whole organization and leaders began research into the issue. Their research revealed a huge difference in student achievement between crowded schools in their neighborhoods and smaller schools in more affluent areas. Their research into the effects of school size on student learning helped them see the advantages of small schools and they began to develop a campaign to have the Oakland Unified School District adopt a small schools policy. The search for locations for new, small schools brought them back to the Montgomery Ward site.

"At our annual meeting in May 1997, we publicly talked for the first time to city representatives and the School District, and got their support for three badly needed schools, including one at the Ward's site," reported an OCO leader. But gentrification threatened the neighborhood, and residents found themselves in the middle of competing interests regarding how the site should be used. The process of gentrification was increasing the property value of the site. Whenever the leaders thought they were close to having the building torn down, they would meet new obstacles, often in the form of lawsuits launched by developers who wanted to use the property for commercial purposes or for new middle class housing. They also had to confront the Montgomery Ward Corporation. OCO members learned that while Montgomery Ward claimed it lacked the financial resources to tear down the building, the company was buying up chain stores throughout the Northeast.

To succeed in demolishing the building and acquiring the space for small schools, OCO used a range of tactics directed at different levels of the system. Leaders continuously met with neighborhood residents to build and replenish the ranks to keep the effort going. They sent 1,500 petitions to Montgomery Ward's Chicago headquarters. Leaders met with elected and non-elected officials at city, School District, and state levels to make their concerns known and enlist their support. They held public events attended by thousands of residents at which they asked officials for their commitment. They met with Montgomery Ward's corporate leaders. They made regular phone calls to mobilize people to take action and accompany the city inspector into the building or monitor the proceedings of lawsuits in courtrooms. Once demolition began, they enlisted residents to take photos of the site to prove that demolition was proceeding as it should.

In February 2001, a group of developers made a last ditch legal effort to have the court grant a stay of demolition. By this time, however, the community, city, and School District were speaking with one voice. The court denied the developer's appeal.

Eight years after the residents had identified the Montgomery Ward warehouse as a problem, the wrecking ball brought it down and temporary classrooms were set up. In the process, new community leaders were beginning to experience the reality of


STRENGTHENED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT NONE OF US STANDS ALONE,
THROUGH OUR ORGANIZED EFFORTS WE KNOW WE CAN WIN MANY VICTORIES.

community power as teachers and parents met together to design new small schools. As one leader told us, "*All these research meetings and actions and the work and training they necessitated became a veritable leadership "classroom" for new and emerging leaders, as well as for experienced leaders.... Armed with all the facts, willing to do the work and to testify on our own behalf, and strengthened with the knowledge that none of us stands alone, through our organized efforts we know we can win many victories.*"

"*We were able to take on the big fight and win.*" OCO LEADER

Applying the Theory of Change

The context for this story is one familiar to community organizing groups in urban areas: a low- to moderate- income neighborhood threatened by gentrification fighting for housing affordability and for better neighborhood schools and educational opportunities for their children. In this particular case, the organizing began with the neighborhood's concern about blight and gentrification and became linked to the organizing group's small schools campaign, which was developing simultaneously with the effort to have the deteriorating Montgomery Ward warehouse demolished.

Over the course of the eight years it took to succeed in having the building torn down, the OCO small schools campaign picked up significant momentum: OCO built a partnership with the Bay Area Coalition for Equitable Schools (BayCES), an established school reform group, and together they wrote a small schools policy requiring significant community-school interaction, which the Oakland Board of Education adopted in spring 2000; a newly appointed superintendent established a school reform office with responsibility for working in partnership with OCO and BayCES to implement new small schools; a city bond issue passed (with OCO's help), which matched local funds with state funding for new facilities and targeted low- to moderate-income neighborhoods; the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation contributed almost $16 million to support new small schools in Oakland; and OCO, which represents 30,000 families, gained a seat at the table where designs for new small schools are reviewed and approved.

OCO's dual commitment to community and schools enabled its organizers and leaders to build a neighborhood resident base willing to take collective action over a long period. Using the eight indicator areas, we can point to the accomplishments of OCO and the process through which work in each indicator area moved the group toward their ultimate goal of improving schools and outcomes for children.

The Building Blocks of Community Organizing: Leadership Development, Community Power and Social Capital

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Identify and train parents and community members (and sometimes teachers, principals, and students) to take on leadership roles
- Develop parents and community members (teachers, principals, and students) as politically engaged citizens
- Promote individual, family, and community empowerment

COMMUNITY POWER

- Create a mass based constituency within communities that results in deep membership commitment and large turnout
- Form partnerships for legitimacy and expertise
- Create a strong organizational identity
- Draw political attention to the organization's agenda

SOCIAL CAPITAL

- Build networks
- Build relationships of mutual trust and reciprocity
- Increase participation in civic life

Organizers and long-standing leaders with experience from past neighborhood campaigns regularly held "one-on-ones" or individual meetings with neighborhood residents, as well as house meetings with small groups of neighbors to surface neighborhood concerns. The work of organizers and leaders in helping residents see their shared concerns is essential to build the kinds of relationships needed to take collective action. Their outreach also identified new leaders, necessary to renew the ranks to sustain the eight-year struggle. The countless individual and group meetings, research, reflection, and public actions developed the knowledge, expertise, and strategic thinking leaders need. As one leader pointed out, the Montgomery Ward campaign was a "classroom" for leadership development.

The deteriorating Ward's building and overcrowding in the schools were issues on which community residents were willing to act. Over the course of the campaign, OCO held several public actions that thousands of community residents attended. Their ability to turn out high numbers built their reputation in Oakland as a powerful organization and a voice of the community.

The Ward's story also demonstrates OCO's success in building influence, through expanding social capital. In contrast to those living in more affluent neighborhoods, where relationships with civic and elected leaders often grow naturally out of work and social contacts, residents of low-income neighborhoods rarely have such connections. Neighborhood leaders met with city and School District officials and through face-to-face discussions, they succeeded in building alliances around issues of mutual concern. The mayor and/or the superintendent regularly attended their public actions. Through public actions and evaluation meetings, OCO leaders and organizers brought together principals, teachers, and diverse community residents—all stakeholders in public education—who do not usually associate with each other because of ethnic/racial or linguistic differences or differences in roles and positions. This "bridging" social capital—across diverse groups within the community and across groups with different roles, status, and authority—is especially important in moving organizing campaigns forward because it creates accountable relationships that build the political will to override private interests.

The Bridge to School Change: Public Accountability

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

- Create a public conversation about public education and student achievement
- Monitor programs and policies
- Participate in the political arena
- Create joint ownership/relational culture

Prevailing notions of accountability are usually narrow, with the burden for students' academic success falling on teachers and students, regardless of the conditions for teaching and learning. This narrow view of accountability has promoted a culture of blame in which teachers blame families for students' failures

and parents blame poor teaching for student failure. In contrast, community organizing groups seek to broaden out accountability, with an array of public school stakeholders assuming responsibility for the conditions of public education and ultimately accountability for student success. In the Montgomery Ward's story, for example, elected officials made public commitments when they attended OCO's annual meeting in which OCO discussed plans for new small schools.

By bringing their agenda into the public arena, OCO challenged the bureaucratic culture in which decision-makers often pass responsibility off one to the other, and took a first step in holding public officials accountable. They were laying the groundwork for making decisions regarding the public schools through a public process, rather than one that takes place behind closed doors. This public discourse about issues of concern to low-income community residents can bring elected officials to take up the interests of the community over those of powerful economic and political players. In this case, neighborhood residents persuaded their elected city and School District representatives to support the use of the warehouse site to benefit neighborhood residents through the designation of the land for new schools, rather than for plans that would have mainly benefited developers and/or middle- and upper-income renters and home buyers.

The Pressure for Equity and School/Community Connection Enhances School Climate and Instruction and Curriculum

EQUITY

- Increase funding and resources to under-resourced schools
- Maximize access of low-income children to educational opportunities
- Match teaching and learning conditions with those in the best schools

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY CONNECTION

- Create multi-use school buildings
- Position the community as a resource
- Create multiple roles for parents in schools
- Create joint ownership of schools and school decision-making

POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

- Improve facilities
- Improve safety in and around the school
- Create respectful school environments
- Build intimate settings for teacher/student relations

HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION AND CURRICULUM

- Identify learning needs, carry out research, and implement new teaching initiatives and structures
- Enhance staff professionalism
- Make parents and community partners in children's education
- Hold high expectations

Linking the effort to have the Ward's warehouse torn down with the campaign for new small schools reflects the struggle of OCO members for greater equity. They made public the disparity in school size and quality between one part of the city and another, and their campaign aimed to make it possible for their children to benefit from the same teaching and learning conditions as those in more affluent neighborhoods. At the same time, opening new small schools would reduce overcrowding in nearby schools, further reducing the disparity in school size.

From their research, OCO members learned that the relationships between teachers and students and their parents were closer and more supportive in small schools. These kinds of relationships shape school climate, increasing parents' presence in the school and exchange between teachers and parents about expectations. The evidence from research on small schools is that stronger relationships can also result in fewer discipline problems and higher student academic motivation.[20] A positive school climate can also reduce the high level of teacher turnover that plagues low-income urban schools.

Establishing new small schools goes beyond bricks and mortar, and securing the land was still the very beginning of making small schools a reality. The Request for Proposals for small schools, which OCO helped to write, requires that parents and teachers plan for small schools together, which can further strengthen the school/community connection by creating a shared vision. As part of the design process, OCO, with BayCES, is helping teachers and parents investigate innovative school structures, as well as new approaches to instruction and curriculum. For example, they are visiting other schools that can provide them with new images of teaching and learning. By focusing on equity and strengthening school/community connection, OCO's small schools campaign intended to influence the quality of children's educational experience and thereby set the stage for greater academic success.

The story of the small schools campaign in Oakland illustrates the theory of action and how work in each of the indicator areas can contribute to improving the conditions for teaching and learning that are likely to increase student performance. The next two sections of this report address how to account for variation across organizing sites and the unique contribution of community organizing to school reform.

OCO's small schools strategy was motivated and shaped by the local context, both the challenges and opportunities that the city's political, economic, and demographic environment presented. The strategy was influenced by OCO's neighborhood-oriented organizing approach through which issues are raised and priorities set. The history of OCO's work on other issues, as well as its prior efforts in education, shaped the direction of its education organizing and contributed to its success in obtaining change at the policy level. This story illustrates how organizing proceeds on multiple levels—addressing neighborhood issues while at the same time seeking to influence policy citywide. Each of these influences—context, organizational structure, the phase of organizing, and the multiple levels of work—offers insight for interpreting OCO's education organizing story. The next section of this report discusses education organizing stories in the other case study sites as well, using these four influences to make sense of variation in the strategies and accomplishments of community organizing groups.

NOTES

20. Michelle Fine and J.I. Somerville, (Eds.), *Small Schools, Big Imaginations, A Creative Look at Urban Public Schools*, Chicago, IL: Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, 1998.

V. Making Sense of the Variation among Organizing Groups

We have used the story of one community organizing group, Oakland Community Organizations, to explain the indicators and the theory of change. Yet, no two organizing efforts or campaigns look exactly alike. There is a great deal of variation across education organizing sites and an observer might well ask what accounts for this variation. So far, we have discussed the "rules" that underlie the process of community organizing, but we have not yet explained the differences in how these rules are applied in particular places, by particular groups, and at particular points in time. Understanding the influences on organizing activity helps to make sense of how organizing plays out across settings and how activities taking place at a particular point in time relate to the larger effort. This section of the report uses examples from all of the sites that we studied to discuss these influences. They are:

- CONTEXT
- ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS
- PHASE OF ORGANIZING
- LEVELS OF WORK: NEIGHBORHOOD, SCHOOL, DISTRICT, AND STATE

Context

Characteristics of the region, state, and city in which a community organizing group works shape their activity. Important contextual characteristics include the complexity and size of the school district, existing reform policies, or their absence, at city and state levels, the political environment, economic conditions, demographics, and the nature of the local community organization and non-profit infrastructure. Here we select a few salient contextual influences in each site that we believe shaped their definition of the key educational problems to be addressed and the strategies they employed to resolve them.

Oakland Community Organizations

As the story in the last section showed, Oakland Community Organizations defined the problem as overcrowded, under-performing schools in Oakland's low- to moderate-income neighborhoods. The overcrowding was the result of an explosive growth in new Latino and Asian immigrant populations in historically African-American areas and an accompanying lack of investment in new school buildings to accommodate the children of this growing population. Furthermore, the turnover of three superintendents in four years created instability in leadership at the school district level and, consequently, an absence of a coherent plan for reform of the city's schools. In this vacuum, OCO's collaboration with BayCES, a school reform organization with access to the newest superintendent, led to small schools becoming a major component of the District's reform plan and to the creation of a new office for reform to implement the policy.

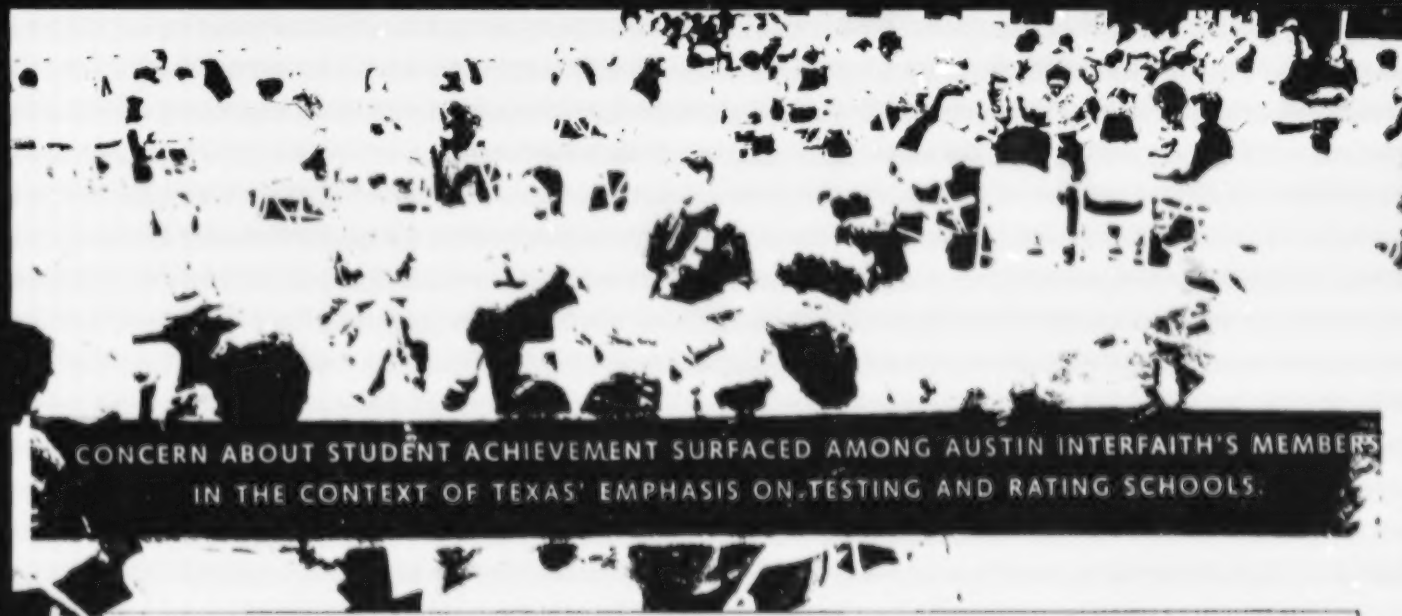
Logan Square Neighborhood Association

The Logan Square area in Chicago also experienced an influx of mostly Latino immigrants. As in Oakland, the consequences were overcrowded schools. Chicago's earlier school reform initiative created an important vehicle, the Local School Council, for organizing parents around education issues and gave the community a link to the schools and authority in dealing with education-related issues. As the introductory story relates, LSNA organized parents and community members and led successful campaigns to obtain funding to build annexes to relieve overcrowding.

The schools that benefited from LSNA's efforts to relieve overcrowding became active members of the organization. Looking for other ways to strengthen school/community connections, parents and educators sought to address parents' isolation and lack of empowerment. They fought for new schools, expansion of parent mentoring, and the development of Community Learning Centers. LSNA's Parent Mentor Program (described in the opening of this report), which brings parents into classrooms, and the establishment of community centers at six schools, addressed this need, and fostered individual growth for the hundreds of women who have participated in the program since its inception. Graduates run the community centers and are taking on other leadership roles in Logan Square.

The Alliance Organizing Project

The Alliance Organizing Project (AOP) in Philadelphia has worked both with individual schools and citywide, focusing its efforts on issues of safety, student achievement, and teacher quality. Recognizing the lack of parent engagement with previous waves of reform, a new superintendent and many of the city's advocacy groups conceived of AOP in 1995 as a


CONCERN ABOUT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT SURFACED AMONG AUSTIN INTERFAITH'S MEMBERS
IN THE CONTEXT OF TEXAS' EMPHASIS ON TESTING AND RATING SCHOOLS.

component of the District's reform plan. AOP's mission is to help in the "transformation in the relationship between every school and the parents and communities which surround it."[21]

AOP's safety campaigns are the direct result of the deteriorated school facilities and extreme conditions of blight and high crime in the declining city neighborhoods where it has been most active. The safety campaign targeted city council, which passed an ordinance to increase funding for crossing guards. AOP also raised funds from local non-profits and the District for after-school programs, providing children with a safe place after school hours as well as with academic enrichment.

Another set of problems that AOP identified was the impact of teacher shortages, teacher turnover, and the high concentration of inexperienced teachers in low-performing schools. Problems with teacher recruitment and school assignment have to do with a city residency requirement for public employees and with union contract rules on seniority and transfers. Lack of adequate funds in the School District of Philadelphia and an ongoing feud between the city and state about the state's contribution to the School District's budget, further complicate the situation. AOP has taken the initiative to address these complex issues on several fronts: they joined in a coalition with advocacy groups to demand that the city alter its residency requirement; they fostered parent-union dialogue at local schools and citywide with a social justice agenda; they joined others in the state capitol demanding increased funding; and most recently, AOP banded together with union, advocacy, and other community based groups to head off privatization of the District.

New York ACORN

The size, complexity, and political nature of the New York City school system present an enormous challenge to education organizing, leading New York ACORN to work on a variety of fronts and at different system levels. Extreme discrimination in access to selective programs at every level of the system, documented by New York ACORN through its *Secret Apartheid* reports, is another defining characteristic of the context. Underlying the discrimination in access to challenging programs is the inadequacy of most neighborhood schools to prepare low-income, mostly minority students for these programs.

In the face of these problems, there has been a movement to establish small schools with community partners throughout New York City. New York ACORN's efforts to establish small autonomous high schools both shape and take advantage of the momentum for small schools. Currently, New York ACORN is working with three new high schools and starting on the process of establishing a fourth. To impact schools at a larger scale, New York ACORN also launched a campaign to work with a number of elementary schools in three South Bronx Districts. In support of more local efforts, New York ACORN has formed coalitions at both the city and state levels

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21. School District of Philadelphia, *Children Achieving Strategic Action Design, 1995-1999*, Philadelphia, 1995, p.i VIII-1.

to push for funding equity and policies to increase spending on instructional materials, lower class size, attract qualified teachers, institute early childhood education, and ensure adequate facilities.

Austin Interfaith

The majority of children from low- to moderate-income families live in Austin's East Side neighborhoods. Many of the schools that have become part of Austin Interfaith's network of "Alliance Schools" are in these neighborhoods, close to the congregations that are among its member institutions. The tradition of working with local congregations on issues that concern their membership and the relatively small size of the Austin School District (about 100 schools) shapes Austin Interfaith's strategy of working closely with individual schools and congregations in "Alliance communities."

Concern about student achievement surfaced among Austin Interfaith's members in the context of Texas' emphasis on testing and rating schools. The District's magnet programs reinforced the geographic division among children from different neighborhoods and backgrounds. Children in East Side schools were not getting the preparation necessary to gain entry to magnet programs. The unequal access to magnet programs led to the development of the Young Scientist Program, designed to prepare students to apply to the competitive science magnet middle school.

Different contextual features in each of the sites offered both opportunities and constraints. Each of the groups used strategies that reflected local issues and capitalized on the opportunities for action. Contextual constraints, however, can draw out or set back efforts and can require compromise or reevaluation of initial goals.

Organizational Characteristics

Almost all community organizing groups trace back to Saul Alinsky, whose community organizing in the 1930s was the first to take the methods of union organizing in developing power and apply them to solve issues affecting neighborhoods. Over the years, community organizing has been influenced by the experiences of the civil rights movement, as well as by new leaders within Alinsky's own Industrial Areas Foundation and other national community organizing networks.

In spite of a common heritage, today the organizational characteristics of community organizing groups vary widely. Some of these characteristics include methods of recruitment, governance structures, membership in national organizing networks, multiple or single issue focus, the size of staff, funding base, and alliances and partnerships. (See Table 1 for a summary of recruitment method, network membership, and multiple-/single-issue focus for the five case study groups.)

Table 1: Range of Organizational Characteristics of the Five Groups

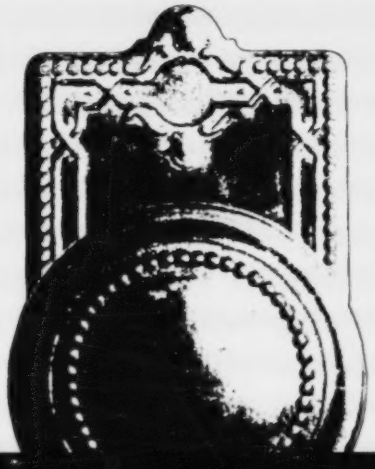
CASE STUDY GROUPS	RECRUITMENT METHOD	NETWORK MEMBERSHIP	SINGLE- OR MULTIPLE-ISSUE FOCUS
Alliance Organizing Project	Individual membership (school-based)		Single-Education
Austin Interfaith	Faith-based institutions, schools, unions	Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF)	Multiple
Logan Square Neighborhood Association	Faith-based institutions, schools, and community organizations		Multiple
New York ACORN	Individual membership (neighborhood-based)	Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)	Multiple
Oakland Community Organizations	Faith-based Institutions	Pacific Institute of Community Organizing (PICO)	Multiple

Organizing Model

Building a strong base is essential for any organization that relies on collective action and high turnout (large numbers of participants who attend their meetings) to build power. Austin Interfaith and Oakland Community Organizations both follow a faith-based institutional model of organizing. In this model, congregations are members of the community organizing group and congregants become part of the organizing group. Congregational representatives make up their governing boards. This model has increased the economic diversity of both Austin Interfaith and OCO, because their member congregations have both low- to middle-income members. In Austin, Alliance Schools also are institutional members. A recent development is the pairing of a neighborhood congregation with a neighborhood school in an "Alliance community". Sometimes a "community" includes a congregation from outside the neighborhood with middle-class constituents who wish to align themselves with low-income communities working on equity and other issues that they believe should be of broad public concern. Austin Interfaith also has a union as an institutional member. Both Austin Interfaith and OCO work at the neighborhood level as well as on issues that cross over neighborhoods and schools.

LSNA is also based on an institutional model, but its members include a varied set of neighborhood groups, e.g., block clubs, congregations, cultural and social service agencies, and schools. Representatives from its member organizations come together to plan and approve the LSNA Holistic Plan, which guides the activity of the organization. For the most part, LSNA does not tackle citywide issues unless they affect its local neighborhood.

In contrast to the institutional model of building a base, New York ACORN recruits members directly from neighborhoods, going door-to-door. New York ACORN organizers from neighborhood chapters that they work with to identify local issues and take action. Citywide committees, including an education committee, are made up of chapter members and determine issues for citywide and statewide campaigns. As a result, New York ACORN works on multiple tracks, with efforts at the chapter level focused on issues at local schools and citywide committees focused on district, city and state policy.



AOP, because of its origins in Philadelphia's school reform plan, starts its recruitment with parents from select neighborhood schools. Parents become members of school-based Parent Leadership Teams and these teams join together through AOP activities citywide to address concerns that cross over neighborhoods and schools. Because AOP's membership recruitment is based in parents with children in schools, who leave when their children move on, AOP has to work hard to maintain and expand its base. They also have had to work hard to win the support of principals and teachers, which further challenged their recruitment efforts.

Network Membership

Three of the five groups, Austin Interfaith, New York ACORN, and OCO, are part of national organizing networks. These networks facilitate local affiliates coming together around shared interests. They also provide training to organizers and leaders and connect local groups giving them fresh ideas and renewed energy. They hold conferences for intellectual exchange about the substance of education reforms. They sometimes bring additional financial resources to a local group. In some instances, statewide affiliates of a network work together to gain state resources and policy change.

The two groups not a part of a national organizing network, AOP and LSNA, have made use of other national networks. For example, LSNA is a member of United Power for Action and Justice, the IAF metropolitan-wide organization in Chicago and collaborates with other groups including the Cross City Campaign. AOP taps into the Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, which provides it with training and contacts with other education organizing groups. AOP participates in the National Coalition of Education Activists as well. As a result of the Indicators Project, the case study sites have also been able to learn from

each other, through cross-site visits and conferences—a new development that gives them the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences and from the practices of their different organizing models.

Multiple Issue/Single Issue Groups

An advantage of community organizing groups that work on multiple issues (all the groups in this study except AOP) is that they can draw on allies and experience from work in other issue areas to strengthen and inform their education work. The reputations that these organizations have established through their work in the areas of housing, immigration policy, bank lending policy, fair wages, and welfare reform strengthens their hand for organizing around education issues. They have built up a reservoir of political capital on which to draw.

For example, through New York ACORN's extensive work in housing and fair wage issues in New York City, it has made strong allies among individuals who subsequently have risen in political and organizational circles. New York ACORN draws on these associations to facilitate working relations with people important in education and to form alliances when there are areas of common interest.

Staffing

The way in which the groups structure and use their staffs most often reflects the demands of their education organizing strategy. Because AOP is a single-issue group, all of its organizers focus on education. Three of the four other groups have at least one and sometimes as many as eight staff members dedicated solely to education organizing. Any of a group's other organizers, however, might also address education issues as they come up in the course of talking to neighborhood residents about their concerns.

New York ACORN has a Schools Office staffed by two senior staff, with other organizers devoted to the New York ACORN high schools. OCO, with its partner BayCES, hired a teacher on special assignment who was a congregant in one of OCO's churches to do education organizing, specifically to introduce teachers to the small schools campaign and recruit them for design teams. LSNA's education organizers are focused on its Parent Mentor program, coordination of the community centers, and on more general education issues. Austin Interfaith organizers work with specific member institutions, among them individual schools. Regardless of how organizers are deployed, staff of community groups are small, given the scale and complexity of the education problems that they take on.

Funding

The majority of groups involved in education organizing have budgets that are under $500,000.[22] In our case study sample, three of the five groups—AOP, Austin Interfaith, and OCO—had annual budgets under $400,000, similar to most of the 19 groups in the telephone survey. (See Appendix C for the range of funding levels of the 19 groups in the telephone survey.) Two groups had budgets that were much larger. LSNA, which receives grants directly to run programs in the schools, has an annual budget over $1 million. New York ACORN's annual budget, which is also over $1 million, supports education organizing in several of New York City boroughs. Most community organizing groups raise money through a combination of membership contributions, foundations, and/or government grants.

Unlike the others, AOP's initial funding was entirely dependent on its association with Philadelphia's Annenberg-funded school reform plan (1995-2000). During that period, its funding reached $800,000 annually. With the end of the Annenberg grant, however, AOP has had to raise all its funds itself and its current budget is similar to that of most other community organizing groups. (See Table 2 for a summary of the budgets of the case study groups.) Despite the differences in funding levels, it is fair to say that working from relatively modest budgets, they are seeking to leverage significant resources for public schools.

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22. New York University's Institute for Education and Social Policy, with California Tomorrow, Designs for Change, and Southern Echo, *Mapping the Field of Organizing for School Improvement: A report on education organizing in Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, the Mississippi Delta, New York City, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Washington, DC*, 2001, see chart on p. 15.

Table 2: Budget Range of the Five Groups

ALLIANCE ORGANIZING PROJECT (AOP)	$250,000 to 400,000
AUSTIN INTERFAITH	Less Than $250,000
LOGAN SQUARE (LSNA)	$1,000,000 to 1,600,000
NEW YORK ACORN	$1,000,000 to 1,600,000
OAKLAND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS (OCO)	$250,000 to 400,000

Alliances and Coalitions

Another characteristic of these groups is the kind of alliances and coalitions that they form and how they use those relationships to strengthen the organization itself. OCO derived educational expertise through a partnership with BayCES, a school reform group that had experience working with the district and legitimacy in the field of education. LSNA has many alliances, including partnerships that bring expertise to their education efforts. For example, they are partnering with a local university to train 45 neighborhood residents to become bi-lingual teachers. They also are working with a local advocacy and technical assistance group in developing the neighborhood-wide literacy effort. New York ACORN has worked in collaboration and coalition with many different kinds of organizations to build legitimacy, gain expertise, and increase political clout. For example, it partnered with a university-based research and technical assistance organization to document discrimination and the concentration of under-performing schools in the South Bronx. New York ACORN formed a coalition with other organizing groups in New York City to push citywide issues such as more equitable spending for class size reduction, school construction, and teacher quality.

AOP partnered with another community organizing group to investigate issues of teacher vacancy in neighborhood schools. A well-established Philadelphia advocacy group published the findings along with potential solutions. More recently, AOP has been part of a citywide coalition to fight against privatization of the public schools.

Despite the variations described here, all of the groups believed it important to build organizational capacity through alliances and coalitions. They were always looking for opportunities to expand their reach, legitimacy, and expertise, approaching this task in ways that best fit their goals.

Phase of Organizing

Organizing campaigns take place over a long period of time and, generally, organizing groups work on multiple campaigns and activities simultaneously. Understanding the phase of a campaign in which a group is working, or where an activity fits into a campaign, is critical for seeing its relevance to a wider scale effort with larger goals. It is also important for being able to define expectations for the group's accomplishments at a given point in time.

The organizing group also takes on different roles in its relationship to educators at different points in an organizing process. The group may call on existing alliances at the start of a campaign, but play an outside role in actions that require obtaining public commitments. As an organizing group moves closer to its goals, such as policy change or alliances with schools, it moves into a collaborative relationship with educators in order to see these efforts through. Nonetheless, the groups must balance their increasing "insider status" with a position that allows them to continue to hold schools and school systems accountable for following through on their commitments. The tensions in this insider/outsider role thread through the discussion of the phases of organizing that follows. Ideally, working collaboratively while maintaining the tension of being differently positioned will lead both community organizing groups and educators to change in ways that foster productive education reform.

Learning from Past Experience

There is a learning curve in organizing. Phases of organizing often build on understandings of what happened previously. Strategies and campaigns at one moment generally represent refinements of previously successful or disappointing efforts. Learning is embedded in the practice of organizing through the use of evaluation and reflection following every action, in which organizers and leaders ask themselves questions such as *What went well? What could we do better?* and *What do we need to meet our goals?* Multi-issue groups apply lessons learned from organizing on other issues to inform their education organizing as well.

Of the case study groups, all had been organizing in education for about a dozen years, with the exception of AOP, which has been organizing about half as long. New York ACORN started working on establishing schools years before it opened the first New York ACORN high school in 1996. Although its early efforts at starting schools were successful, New York ACORN learned it was difficult to maintain contact and have input once the school was up and running because of New York ACORN's status as a group external to the school. New York ACORN is applying lessons learned from these early experiences about how to structure its schools so it can develop a strong collaboration with its partner high schools.

OCO also learned from its earliest phases of education organizing. OCO began with programmatic initiatives such as after-school homework clubs. These grew out of the perception of many of its congregation members that more youth programming could help stem crime and gang activity. When these programmatic efforts did not improve students' school experience enough, OCO education organizing turned to establishing a school within a school and charter schools. They realized, however, that they needed a system-wide approach and turned to the development of the small schools campaign.

Setting Expectations

The phase of organizing should be considered when setting expectations for the nature and scale of impact of a group's work. Over time there are some initiatives that endure, continuing into increasingly mature phases. Several of the groups have reached a phase in which their work impacts student learning. For example, as illustrated by the story at the beginning of this report, LSNA's Parent Mentor program reaches into the classroom and in the last five years, all of LSNA's core schools have experienced significant increases in test scores. Teacher surveys and interviews with parents and principals attribute some of this gain to the regular presence of parents in the classroom through LSNA's Parent Mentor program.

Five of Austin Interfaith's Alliance Schools now have Young Scientists programs in the sixth grade. This special class has resulted in more children from East Side schools gaining entry into the magnet science middle school. Teachers from the lower grades have commented that the Young Scientists program has stimulated them to improve their curricula and raise expectations, as they try to prepare all their students to be able to qualify for the rigorous sixth grade program.

The first round of small schools is just being implemented as part of the OCO small schools campaign. It is still too early to expect dramatic impact on student achievement, but the District has set goals for improvement for all new small schools and their progress will be tracked.

Using the model of the Theory of Change we presented in section IV, it is possible to see where the work of a group falls in the process between community capacity building and affecting school climate and classroom instruction. Several related campaigns are always going on simultaneously, each at different points in the process. By considering the kinds of accomplishments that could be expected at various organizing phases, expectations can be fitted to the actual work in progress.

Levels of Work: Neighborhood, School, District, and State

Community organizing involves balancing the need to work locally to build the membership base and the capacity to implement change with the need to work at broader levels to affect policy that supports local change. As a result, it is necessary for organizing groups to work at multiple levels simultaneously. Building a base of members is the result of addressing local issues through organizing campaigns or actions leading to concrete outcomes, often within a relatively short time frame. In order to effect change, however, it is often necessary to work at other system levels. It is the job of the organizer to energize members by addressing their immediate concerns while at the same time making connections with broader efforts in order to generate adherents for longer and larger scale campaigns, as well as more abstract policy goals.[23]

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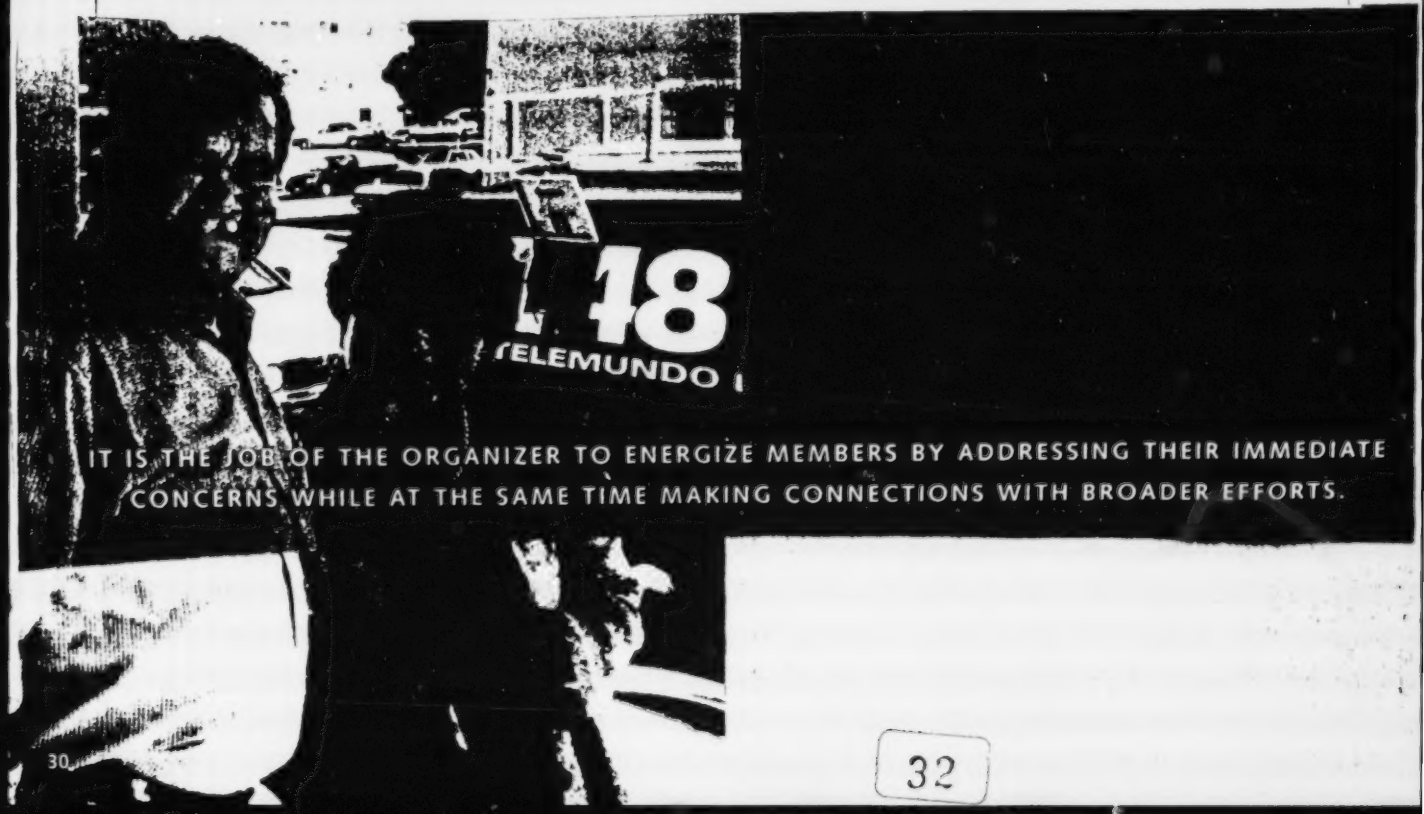
23. Gary Delgado, Organizing the Movement: *The Roots and Growth of ACORN*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986; Janice Hirota, R. Jacobowitz, and P. Brown, *The Donor's Education Collaborative: Strategies for Systematic School Reform*, Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago, 2000; Janice Hirota & L. Jacobs, *Constituency Building for Public School Reform*, Academy for Educational Development & Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago, 2001.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TELEMUNDO
IT IS THE JOB OF THE ORGANIZER TO ENERGIZE MEMBERS BY ADDRESSING THEIR IMMEDIATE CONCERNS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME MAKING CONNECTIONS WITH BROADER EFFORTS.

The OCO small schools story illustrates work on multiple levels. The fight to get the Ward's building torn down began as a local issue to address blight in a neighborhood. Although many participants in that fight came to understand that the struggle to get Wards demolished had become tied to the small schools campaign and reducing overcrowding at neighborhood schools, there were those whose interest was primarily around addressing neighborhood blight. Talking to them would surface the issue of blight and not necessarily reveal how the Montgomery Ward struggle was embedded within the small schools campaign. Vantage point and perceived self-interest plays a role in how participants understand any organizing campaign, and what level and aspects of organizing they emphasize.

In building leadership and community power at the local level, community organizing also builds the capacity of parents, teachers, and administrators to effectively carry out reform efforts and programs. OCO's work with parents and teachers on small school design teams is a case in point. Through the design team process, teachers and parents gain expertise to assure that small schools can deliver on the promise of offering a better environment for learning.

Knowing that organizing works at multiple levels helps to put into perspective the scale at which a group is working. It is not always easy to see the connections among the different activities and the work of the group is to figure out how to connect activities going on at different levels. Making these connections is important if the group's work is to be understood by both their own constituencies and external audiences.

Having looked at the influences on community organizing, the next section looks at the added value of community organizing for school reform. The story of Oakland's small schools campaign illustrates how critical the work of a community organizing group was to initiate a reform effort that paid particular attention to the needs of children in low- to moderate-income neighborhoods and to keep the effort going, even in the face of significant obstacles. We turn to examples from the other sites to explain further the ways that community organizing adds value to school reform efforts through sustaining it, persistence, building political will, and producing change that reflects the concerns of parents and community members.

VI. The Added Value of Community Organizing to School Reform

How is community organizing different from the myriad of other approaches in the school reform marketplace, including many that embrace parent and community connections?

Community organizing is not a prescription for a particular educational program or a restructuring approach. Education research and its application in the development of effective practices are essential to improve classroom instruction and curriculum and school climate. Organizations that support school change through advocacy, technical assistance, and parent engagement provide expertise to educators and community members in developing strategies and exploring alternatives for school improvement. The unique role of community organizing in education reform is in building community capacity and linking to school improvement through public accountability. The indicator areas associated with community capacity and public accountability are almost totally absent in the work of school reform as it is usually defined. Even where there is overlap between the work of community organizing and the work of educators and reform experts—in the areas of equity, school/community connections, curriculum and instruction, and school climate—community organizing adds a critical dimension.

Education organizing adds value to school reform because of the unique and important vantage point that community members and organizers bring to their work. Community organizing groups are rooted in a neighborhood and have a long-term commitment and a deep understanding of what it takes to support local families. In this study, four of the groups have been organizing in their settings for 20 years or more. They see schools as tied to other issues that need attention and improvement. Their constituents are deeply affected and angry when public institutions are ineffective or corrupt. Organizers tap constituents' anger and motivation and facilitate their building the skills and power to become formidable and uncompromising in working for institutional change. Community residents are in it for the long haul, and they have much to gain both for their families and collectively. This level of commitment is critical if reform is going to address equity issues and school/

community connections authentically, which leads to the kinds of improvements to school climate and curriculum and instruction that actually make a difference in student learning.

Community organizing for school reform adds value to school reform efforts in four ways:

- **sustaining** the vision and momentum for change over time;
- **persisting** in working towards change, despite obstacles and setbacks;
- building political capital and creating the **political will** that motivates officials to take action; and
- **producing authentic change** in policies and programs to reflect the concerns of parents and community members.

Sustaining the Work Over Time

School reform is a long-term enterprise, yet many factors in the larger context, such as short-term funding patterns and turnover of politicians and school and city administrations, mean that reforms come and go without taking hold. Community organizing groups are committed to the neighborhoods where their members live, and serve as an external force to keep up the momentum for improvement over time and with a changing cast of players. There are three ways in which community organizing helps to sustain reform efforts over time: maintaining a strong base of constituents, acting as external monitors, and creating a generation of school staff committed to the new paradigm of schools.

Building the base: To keep up the energy and motivation required to engage members in campaigns over time, community organizers and leaders continually work on building the base of constituents. For example, it took many years of organizing before Oakland city officials actually broke ground for new schools. Some neighborhood residents were part of the effort for the entire eight years that it took to get the building torn down. During that time, the organizing sustained community participation in the fight. Organizers could tap into neighborhood residents' deep commitment to reclaiming the Wards site for neighborhood use and to improving local educational opportunities.

Monitoring reforms: Community organizing also contributes to sustaining reform by monitoring programs and promises and, in this way, encouraging follow-through. New York ACORN offers an example of sustaining reform through assuming the role of monitor. As detailed earlier, New York ACORN carried out studies that documented discrimination in informing African-American and Latino parents about innovative programs within neighborhood schools. Extensive press coverage of New York ACORN's study and its own dissemination strategies kept the findings under public scrutiny, leading the chancellor to respond. He created a policy to provide a uniform protocol across schools for disseminating information. Once the chancellor made a commitment, New York ACORN assumed the role of monitor, and one year later, repeated the study finding that the policy still had not been implemented. They used the findings of the second report as the basis for further research and action. A turnover in chancellors, however, has meant that New York ACORN has had to keep up the fight for equity in other ways, including its campaign to bring resources to schools in the South Bronx.

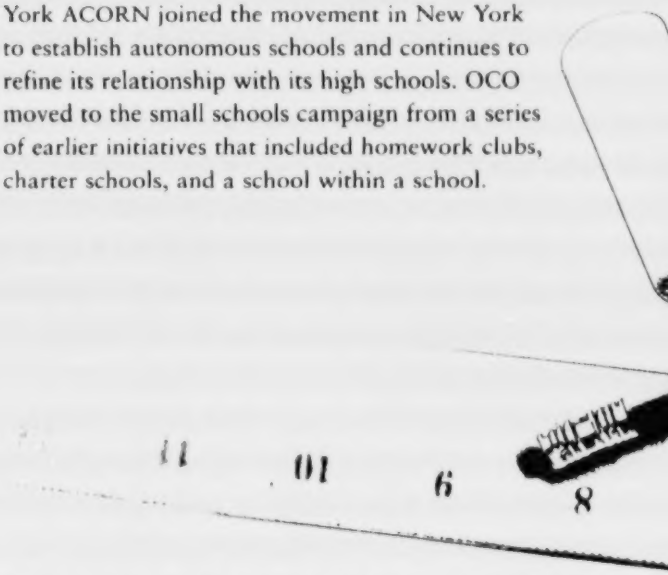
Connecting with educators: Community organizing also contributes to sustainability by nurturing like-minded professionals. The assumptions and practice of teachers and administrators, who work in settings that have become more collaborative, change as they begin to adopt the stance of the new paradigm connecting communities and schools. Some go on to lead other schools and develop adherents and leaders in another generation. Those who stay in a setting keep up the principles of strong school/community connection by "socializing" incoming principals and teachers. In Austin, for example, there is a cadre of principals who were socialized in the collaborative culture of Alliance Schools and who are now bringing their own schools into the network. Recently, the district has contributed to creating a second generation of principals by calling on experienced Alliance school principals to interview candidates for administrative openings at Alliance Schools. A self-sustaining culture is forming in which school staff, who have credibility among their colleagues, organize for the same goals as those of Austin Interfaith. In addition to Austin, we have noted the same phenomenon in the Logan Square neighborhood and in New York.

Persistence

Without persistent champions, the strong counterforces of entrenched bureaucracy and competing political and economic interests can derail reforms. Community organizing brings persistence to reform efforts in three ways: strong motivation, research and learning from experience, and power through its base of constituents and strategic collaborations.

Motivation: The high level of passion and commitment of community residents most directly affected by failing neighborhood schools motivates them to find ways around obstacles. The origins of New York ACORN's *Secret Apartheid* reports offers an example of how the passion and anger of two community residents led the system to adopt a new policy. When two New York ACORN members, one white and one African-American, compared notes on how they were treated when they inquired about their neighborhood school, they realized that they had received completely different information about available options. While the principal gave the white parent a tour and a full description of the school's specialized programs, the African-American parent received superficial information and her request to meet with the principal was denied. Their anger about the disparity in their experiences resonated with the experience of other New York ACORN members and prompted the first *Secret Apartheid* study, which used the fair housing testing approach and documented the extent of the discriminatory practices. As noted, New York ACORN followed up on the initial report, revisiting how schools gave information after promised policy changes. When they discovered that the policies had not been translated into action, New York ACORN members turned to other strategies to address unequal access, including filing a lawsuit under the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights.

Research: A second way that education organizing adds persistence to school reform efforts is through its tradition of research and reflection, which enables community members to circumvent bureaucracies often-used subterfuge of misinformation. In the fight to get the Montgomery Ward building torn down for new schools, Oakland community members rejected the company's claim that it lacked the resources to demolish the building. Their research showed that the company had earned significant profits. They made that information public, so it could not be used as an excuse for inaction. Research and reflection also lead to learning from experience. New York ACORN and OCO's early experiences in establishing schools led them to develop new strategies. In establishing three New York ACORN high schools, New York ACORN joined the movement in New York to establish autonomous schools and continues to refine its relationship with its high schools. OCO moved to the small schools campaign from a series of earlier initiatives that included homework clubs, charter schools, and a school within a school.



Powerful Base: A third aspect of education organizing that generates persistence in school reform is the organizing group's reputation through its strong base and strategic alliances. A group's strong base of constituents can discourage officials from bringing up obstacles in the first place. Strategic alliances add expertise and strengthen the organization's reputation and legitimacy to work in the education arena. OCO's reputation as an organization that can turn out 2,000 members and New York ACORN's reputation as the voice of New York City's low-income parents were both widely recognized. In both cities, education-based non-profits sought out these organizations to partner in reform because of their reputations as powerful organizations with strong community bases.

Political Will

Bureaucracies, such as city government and urban school systems, are known for inaction, corruption, and resistance to change. The structure of accountability can be diffuse, making it possible for officials to pass responsibility off, one to another. In addition, school and public officials manage competing interests, and they often act in their own best interest—avoiding the risk of losing power. Three features of education organizing mitigate these impediments to action. Through community organizing, which builds "bridging" social capital, community members establish relationships of trust with school and elected

officials. Through these relationships, they become aware of each other's concerns and agendas and make commitments for follow-through. Secondly, powerful communities can counter competing economic and political interests, ultimately compelling officials to act in the interests of low-income communities. Making discussions public is a third way that education organizing creates the political will that can bring bureaucracies to take action. When these discussions are public, everyone's interests are on the table. Without back door deals, it is more difficult to dodge responsibility for taking action.

The work of LSNA offers a good example of building political will. LSNA builds on its relationships of trust to convene its member groups, including schools, to craft a Holistic Plan. The Holistic Plan, a set of one-year goals and strategies to achieve them, is created through a collective process that proceeds with several meetings prior to an annual convention where the plan is adopted. The convention draws about 1000 people from LSNA's institutional members, including local schools. The process of developing the Holistic Plan puts discussions of community issues in the public arena. The result is a widely agreed upon agenda for community improvement.

With the issue of school overcrowding on the public agenda in the early 1990s, LSNA was able to demonstrate it had wide agreement about the need for facilities, which, in turn, obligated officials to take action. As a result, the school district committed funds for new neighborhood school facilities. Similar to the Oakland example, gentrification pressures in the Logan Square neighborhood threatened its obtaining a site for one of the new middle schools. The community's power and its public commitments enabled LSNA to head off a last minute maneuver on the part of the school district to sell the lot to a developer. The annexes and new middle schools would not have been built if those with the power to allocate funds or designate land use had not been made to feel accountable to low- and moderate-income residents in Oakland or in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood.

Producing Authentic Change in Policies and Programs that Reflect the Concerns of Parents and Community

By adding the perspectives of families and communities to the school reform equation, education organizing reflects the essence of the new paradigm, which values local knowledge and takes into account the dynamic between schools and their external environment. There are four ways in which parent and community voices can strengthen school reform efforts: making curriculum more challenging and congruent with community life; raising issues that otherwise would not come up; revealing how schools and the community can be resources for each other; and creating joint ownership of schools and reform.

The bottom line for parents is that children are getting what they need to be successful at the next level of school or in life. When low-income parents and community members become leaders and gain sophistication with education issues and politics, they are more likely to make the kinds of demands on schools that their middle-class counterparts do. They demand that their children are challenged and that the curriculum reflects their values and culture. As a result, school reforms with strong community engagement are likely to result in more challenging teaching that addresses students' learning needs, as well as curriculum that taps into student and

community knowledge. Such a curriculum is more connected to community values and can better support student achievement.

The establishment of the Young Scientists Program in Austin was an outgrowth of parents raising the question of whether or not teachers were preparing children to compete academically. Adding a competitive sixth-grade program increased the level of challenge at each of the grades feeding into it, because, as noted previously, every teacher wanted his or her students to qualify. Community voices also influenced curriculum in Austin, where non-English-speaking parents wanted their children to learn English, but also to retain their home language. Parents fought along with teachers and administrators for a better bilingual policy and funds for more bilingual teachers and materials.

A second way in which the addition of community voices contributes to reform is by raising issues that would not have come up otherwise and then developing initiatives to address them. Both in the beginning stages of forming an Alliance school partnership and on an ongoing basis, teachers go on "neighborhood walks" paired with a community leader. In Austin, neighborhood walks raised the problem of high absenteeism among the children which parents connected to the lack of neighborhood health services. This led to a successful campaign to establish a health clinic at the school.

A third way in which including community voices adds value to reform is in making the walls between schools and communities more permeable. The school becomes a resource to the community and the community becomes a resource to the schools. LSNA offers an illustration. The Parent Mentor program was initiated because of the perceived need to strengthen parent involvement by both parents and local school staff members. Subsequently, parent mentors called for community centers to provide adult education and after-school programs. Working with principals in neighborhood schools, LSNA obtained funding to set up six community centers. Parents who come to the community centers often become active in the school through participation in the Parent Mentor program, on the school bilingual committee, as well as running for election to the Local School Council. Parent-mentors often enter classes at the community centers and a multi-layered network of school/community relationships is built.

Finally, the addition of parent and community voices to school reform creates joint ownership of programs, providing needed support for their continuity and effectiveness. For example, AOP parents obtained funding for after-school programs to support kindergarten and first grade students with the greatest academic needs. They engaged teachers by asking them to help identify students for the program and books for the children's home libraries. The teachers opened their classrooms to the parents, inviting the after-school program participants to use classroom materials such as books, computers, and games. Teachers began using the same books in their classrooms that children were taking home. They reported that students in the program benefited from the homework help they were receiving in the after-school program and from the extra social and academic attention.

The fight for a bilingual policy in Austin started with the concerns of teachers in one school in which there were too few placements for non-English-speaking students. They brought the problem to the attention of the principal, who in turn raised parents' awareness. Eventually the issue reached the top of Austin Interfaith's agenda. Together parents, teachers and administrators put pressure on school district officials to win a new policy and funding for additional teachers and materials.

When schools value parents' and community members' knowledge and traditions, the continuity between students' homes and school is stronger. It undergirds parents' ability to support their children and children's ability to make positive choices about their own commitment to their academic pursuits. Responsiveness to community interests shapes reform in ways that make the school program more effective in motivating and challenging students, as well as in activating external support systems to work for children's school success.

Moving into collaborative relationships with educators creates tensions in parents' roles. While working with educators is critical, parents and community members must not lose their power to hold the institution accountable. In these collaborative roles, they are working directly with education insiders. Although their goals can be the same as educators, parents must sometimes step outside of their roles as collaborators in order to hold school officials accountable and to reach these goals.

VII. Challenges and Recommendations for Extending and Supporting the Work of Community Organizing

Education organizing holds much promise for reframing school reform in the new paradigm that connects communities and schools. In this report, we have explained the process by which community organizing works to address the problems of schools in low-income communities and we have offered a framework for assessing its accomplishments. The process starts with building capacity for civic participation in the community that leads both to new structural and power arrangements in schools and school systems, as well as to improved school climate and new teaching and learning practices that ultimately increase student achievement. Along with another recent study by the New York University's Institute for Education and Social Policy,[24] we have documented the contribution of education organizing to building the political will to improve public education for those low-income communities that our public schools have failed most often. This study also identifies the other ways in which community organizing adds value to school reform: sustaining efforts over time, persisting in the face of obstacles, and inserting parent and community voices in the dialogue on school reform. Although our findings point to the successes of community organizing, it is important to keep in mind how hard the work of community organizing is and the many challenges the groups face.

An experienced organizer told us that education is the most difficult area in which his organization works. There are many reasons why organizing work in the field of education is so difficult. Education is embedded in social, political, and economic systems and requires addressing education problems at a scale big enough to influence policy. In addition, schools and school districts are complex and entrenched bureaucratic institutions—notoriously resistant to change. The highly charged political environment of public education and the diverse interests represented in the public school debate make it difficult to identify measures of impact that everyone can agree upon. With these challenges in mind, we make recommendations in this closing section for supporting and extending the work of education organizing. The recommendations fall into four categories:

- Building organizational capacity
- Supporting school/community connections: reframing the paradigm
- Expanding expertise and legitimacy
- Demonstrating success

Building Organizational Capacity

Education organizing presents a set of issues that challenge the organizational capacity of community organizing groups. First, community organizing groups that take on the challenge of working on education issues are generally small. Most of the groups have fewer than ten people on staff and some have fewer than five. Most have budgets under $400,000. Second, staffs and budgets are stretched by the need to work on multiple levels simultaneously; on local issues at the neighborhood level to build and nurture their base of constituents, as well as at higher levels in a region, school district, city, or state to effect policy changes. A third issue is the time it takes to achieve results. Most efforts extend over months and even years, and the longer the time frame, the more inevitable turnover among all of the players. Parents, district administrators, and political figures will have come and gone. Community organizing groups' ability to hire experienced organizers and retain them can help provide continuity, keeping the work going despite an unstable environment. Finally, these organizations have found that they can augment their reach and impact through alliances or coalitions with other groups. Coalitions also take time to build.

NOTES

24. New York University's Institute for Education and Social Policy, et al., 2001.

What do these groups need to extend and support their work? First of all, the groups need financial support for the organization and its organizing activities. Adequate funding will allow these groups to:

- Hire organizers to build the base of constituents
- Retain skilled organizers who can make a long-term commitment to education organizing by paying higher salaries and benefits and providing more training
- Ensure continuity in the organizing efforts through multi-year, long-term grants that provide core support
- Demystify education concepts and terminology through increased access to training for parents and community constituents in education issues, research skills, and analysis of policy proposals
- Gain technical assistance through partnerships with organizations that have expertise in data collection and interpretation, policy analysis, legal strategies, media strategies, and so forth
- Increase the scale of impact and build legitimacy through funding for the work of forming coalitions and alliances

Supporting School/Community Connections: Reframing the Paradigm

Community organizing is based in a new paradigm of school reform, one in which the connection between schools and communities is central to school change. In this paradigm, the strengths and knowledge of parents and community members are essential to transforming schools to serve the best interests of families in low- to moderate- income communities. To this end, organizers and community leaders seek ways to build relationships with school staff to ensure community input into the direction and spirit of reform. There are, however, significant barriers to achieving this kind of relationship. First, the entrenched professional culture of schools defines parents and communities as supports to professionals, rather than as collaborators in designing and carrying out children's education. Second, when parents and community members gain a seat at decision-making tables, tensions can surface between professionals and parents/community members. When there are multiple perspectives, conflict is predictable.

All the groups in this study grapple with the management of the contradictions inherent in the insider/outsider status they achieve. They all work toward collaborative relationships while guarding their role

in holding the institution of public education accountable. Regardless of their insider status, they still use organizing strategies, such as large turnout, accountability sessions, and the power of confrontation, in order to move the change process forward.

What can funders and educators do to support this change process? Funders and educators can play a critical role in reframing the paradigm by promoting connections between community organizing and school improvement efforts. They can also reinforce the potential for institutional change by:

- Fostering links between building community capacity and school improvement by helping to connect the program officers in their foundations that fund community development and education reform
- Acknowledging the importance of process measures as well as outcome measures, using the Indicators Framework or other frameworks that account for the complexity of organizing
- Broaden accountability for public education by providing incentives for educators to work with community organizing groups and by convening conferences among differently situated organizations
- Recognizing the unique contributions that community and parent participation bring to school reform
- Normalizing the tensions and conflict that are part of building collaborations

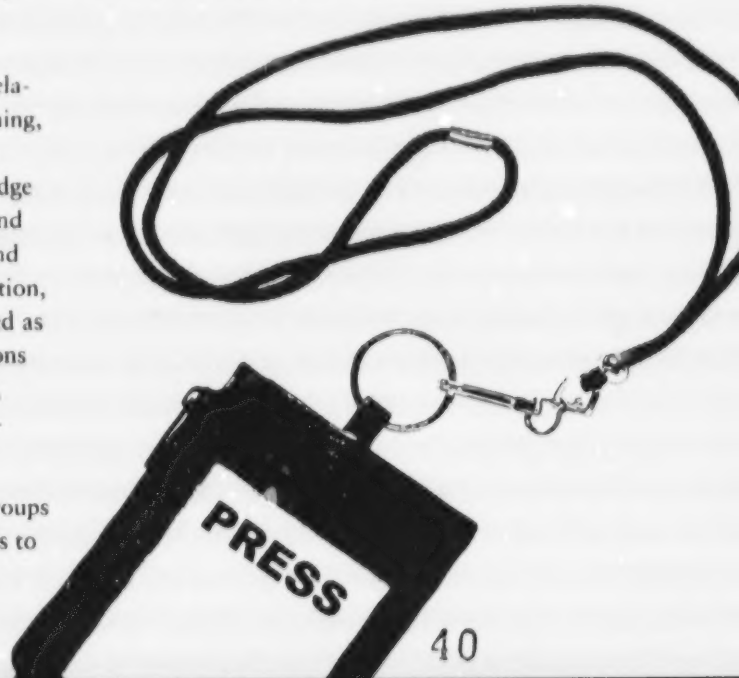
Expanding Expertise and Legitimacy

In order to have influence at any level, community organizing groups must become "players" in the education sphere. To do so, however, they must confront a number of challenges to establishing relationships with education professionals. For one thing, the professional paradigm creates and maintains boundaries through the use of specialized knowledge and language. As a result, community members and parents who lack such knowledge are excluded and their contributions are under-appreciated. In addition, community organizing groups need to be perceived as "legitimate" in order to form collaborative relations with school staff and other school reform groups, and to compete for funding with other education-focused non-profits.

One way in which many community organizing groups compensate for their lack of education expertise is to partner with organizations that have this kind of knowledge. Through these partnerships, community organizing groups receive technical assistance, knowledge of education issues, and research services. They also receive assistance and expertise that can help them to look at data and identify the problems of schools and school systems, leading to strategic decisions about organizing campaigns to address these problems. They also build their legitimacy through association with coalitions and allies that link them to a larger movement. Other intermediary organizations also help community organizing groups enhance their knowledge and skills by providing occasions for dialogue and shared experiences and lessons through national conferences and cross-site visits.

How can community organizing groups gain greater access to resource and technical assistance groups with specialized education knowledge? To support strategic assistance, funders can:

- Facilitate networking among groups doing related or complementary work by sponsoring conferences, cross-site visits, partnerships, and other forums
- Develop and/or increase the capacity of resource and technical assistance groups to provide training, research services, data analysis, and so forth
- Sponsor training, led by resource and/or technical assistance groups, for organizers and community constituents
- Provide media training, so that groups can become more skilled at using the media effectively to communicate their messages



Documenting Success

The Indicators Project started with a small group of funders and school reform activists who believed that if community organizing for school reform was to be credible, then a methodology needed to be developed to document its accomplishments and show how these accomplishments contributed to student learning. This report has presented such a methodology.

We end this report by drawing attention to the importance of this kind of documentation and its use as a means for reaching out beyond the "already convinced" to funders and educators who do not see and/or understand the role of community organizing in school reform.

For a number of reasons, the work of community organizing for school reform is often invisible. Community organizing groups operate on the principle of "power before programs." Their emphasis is on holding others—elected officials and school district administrators—accountable. As a result, credit for new programs often goes to those officials or to those who implement the programs and not to the organizing group. The principle of power before programs also means that community organizing focuses on developing leaders and building community power—intermediate but critical accomplishments, as the theory of change in this study shows.

Another factor that makes it difficult to see the impact of community organizing is that organizing is an ongoing process seeking to transform relationships and institutions. These kinds of cultural changes occur over many years of work, and hence there is no neat beginning, middle, and end. Organizers capture these phenomena in their expression "all organizing is reorganizing," acknowledging that organizing is a continuous process.

The change process makes the work of community organizing difficult to measure. It is often difficult to have enough distance to recognize the significance of earlier outcomes that did not look important initially or were actually disappointing; the tendency is to focus on the significance of later, more impressive outcomes. Furthermore, community organizing groups, already stretched by what they are trying to accomplish, do not have the capacity to document their own work systematically and need the support of external researchers who have credibility with funders and the public.

How can funders further research and documentation?

There are two primary ways. First, funders can provide support for research that deepens understanding of community organizing and that measures the accomplishments of these groups, both at intermediate points in the process of change and when there are outcomes for schools and students. Such measures should be sensitive to:

- The complexity of the process and context of change
- The extended time frame of change
- The importance of outcomes in community capacity (i.e., changes in leadership and levels of community participation) as well as changes in schools (i.e., in areas such as school climate and curriculum and instruction)

Secondly, funders can provide support for taking the research to broader audiences through such venues as:

- Academic conferences and journals
- Settings to which new funders have been invited to learn about community organizing
- Education conferences and journals
- The media

Concluding Comments: The Power of Ordinary People

Anecdotal evidence had led a group of funders and school reform activists associated with the Cross City Campaign to believe that community organizing provided a crucial missing element in school reform—a strong grassroots demand to make public education work for the children of low- to moderate-income families. This group of funders and activists needed systematic evidence of the accomplishments of education organizing.

This study responds to that need. We offer a methodology that funders, community organizing groups, and educators can use to understand both the intermediate and long-term results of education organizing. This methodology accounts for the influences of the social, economic, and political environments in which community organizing takes place and the complexity of changing large, bureaucratic institutions. We highlight the importance of the work of community organizing to build community power, political will, and public accountability in order to redress power imbalances that for too long have maintained an

educational disadvantage for children from low- to moderate-income communities.

The problems of large urban school systems are widespread and complicated. Funders, reformers, and grassroots groups all agree that there is a critical need for change on a large scale. One critique of community organizing as a significant force for improving urban schools has been that these groups are not working at a large enough scale to influence policy. We have found, however, that as community organizing groups establish themselves over time as players in education reform, they build partnerships, alliances, and coalitions that can have an impact at a large scale.

We also found, moreover, that these groups build critical links between policy changes and on-the-ground realities. Their achievements at the local level—the development of education leaders among parents, teachers, and administrators and the strengthening of school/community connections—are crucial parts of turning policy into reality through strong implementation. Community organizing groups also build the capacity of local communities to hold public officials accountable for the implementation of the policies they pass, so that these policies will translate into real improvements for the students they are intended to benefit. The local aspects of "policy work"—building public demand for new policies along with the human capacity to carry out those policies—are too often overlooked. The absence of this local work can explain why many strong school reform plans are never realized.

In summary, we are in agreement with those who say schools cannot do it alone. We argue that the dominant discourse on school reform, which focuses on what happens inside schools and school systems, is not sufficient. This discourse needs to be broadened to include both what happens inside schools and what happens in communities, and the dynamic between them.

To end this report, we turn to a story about Chicago, the location of the story that opened this report. Writing about a 1989 trip to Chicago, the historian Michael B. Katz described his amazement upon hearing that state law had radically decentralized the city's school system, giving parents and community members a significant hand in running their local schools. His previous studies of the history of American education had led him to understand that the dominant form in public schooling—professionalized and bureaucratic—was not inevitable. Before bureaucratized forms came to dominate American education, they had once vied with a more democratic approach. From his historian's perspective, Katz wondered if he was witnessing a momentous turn of events. "Hardly a detached observer, I wanted to know if the course of school reform would sustain my faith in the capacity of ordinary people to manage their schools and in the liberating effects of shedding bureaucratic weight."[25]

In this study, we have shown that when ordinary people enter into the education arena their efforts result in meaningful gains for students who have not been well-served by the public schools. Ordinary people can indeed begin to transform the institution of public education to become more equitable and responsive.

NOTES

25. Michael B. Katz, *Improving Poor People: The Welfare State, the "Underclass," and Urban Schools as History*, p. 100. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Appendix A

The Five Case Study Groups

Alliance Organizing Project

The Alliance Organizing Project (AOP) is a single-issue organizing group focused on making parents and families full partners in school reform. AOP was the idea of a number of advocacy groups concerned with the lack of parent and community participation in school reform and was initiated in 1995 as part of Philadelphia's *Children Achieving* reform plan. During *Children Achieving*, AOP organizers worked in 30 of the district's 260 schools as well as citywide.

Over the course of the past six years, the number of AOP organizers has fluctuated depending on its funding. As of spring 2001, AOP had a racially and ethnically diverse staff, which included an Executive Director, Assistant Director, one full-time organizer, and two part-time organizers. The Executive and Assistant Directors form a team with one white and one African-American member. The group of organizers included a white, an African-American, and a Latina. The entire staff was female. The full and part-time organizers were parents or grandparents with children in the public schools. They have come up through the AOP ranks, first as members of school-based Parent Leadership Teams and representatives and/or leaders of the AOP citywide, then as intern organizers and now as professional organizers. The development of parents into organizers reflects AOP's commitment to being a parent-led organization.

In spring 2001, the organizers were working in seven schools, five elementary and two middle schools. The work in the middle schools is the most recent, and the intent is to continue to organize up through the feeder high schools. At each of the schools, the organizer works intensely with a Parent Leadership Team of six to twelve volunteer parents. AOP also works citywide on issues related to teacher vacancies and teacher quality, with a focus on the schools in the lowest income neighborhoods.

Even though AOP was part of *Children Achieving*, Philadelphia's systemic reform program from 1995-2000, an independent Board has always governed it. The Board originally consisted of two co-chairs and other members representing the advocacy groups that helped to create AOP. Today the Board is primarily made up of parents and community members from the schools and neighborhoods where AOP is active, with the two co-chairs remaining to provide continuity.

Austin Interfaith

Austin Interfaith is an affiliate of the Southwest Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) Network, founded in the mid-1970s. Austin Interfaith, founded in 1985, is a multi-issue coalition of forty-five religious congregations, schools, and other institutions. It is one of the most diverse of the Texas IAF affiliates in its membership, ranging across religious denominations, economic levels, neighborhoods, and ethnic groups. In addition to its work with a network of public schools, the Alliance School Project, Austin Interfaith works in such other areas as job training, youth employment, and adult education. While its member congregations are geographically distributed throughout Austin, many of the schools with which it works are on the East side of Austin and have significant numbers of low-income African-American, Asian and Hispanic students (although in some of the schools, less than 60 percent of the students are eligible for free lunch, and these schools, therefore, do not quality for Title I funds).

Austin Interfaith staff includes a Lead Organizer and two other full-time professional organizers. The staff is ethnically and racially diverse. The Lead Organizer is a white female and one organizer is an African-American male, the other a Hispanic female. Its co-chairs, a group of twelve leaders from among the member institutions, govern the organization. Agendas are also set through a collective leadership group (leaders from across member institutions) and an annual delegate assembly that draws hundreds of constituents.

Logan Square Neighborhood Association

Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA) is a multi-issue organization whose work is guided by a Holistic Plan which includes improving local public schools, developing youth leadership, enhancing neighborhood safety, maintaining affordable housing, and revitalizing the local economy. The Core Committee and issues committees revise the plan on a yearly basis. It is approved by the membership of the organization, which includes both individuals and representatives of forty-seven neighborhood organizations.

LSNA was started in the early 1960s by a group of local churches, businesses, and homeowners to address neighborhood concerns arising from rapid suburbanization and deindustrialization of the Chicago metropolitan area. Around the time of LSNA's formation, longtime residents of Logan Square, primarily working-class families of European descent, were leaving the neighborhood, and new residents were attracted to it, originally Cubans and then Puerto Rican families from nearby Humboldt Park. Since then, the neighborhood has become increasingly Latino, mostly of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Central American heritage. According to the 2000 census, Latinos made up 65.1percent of Logan Square's population.

Changing demographics of Logan Square are reflected in the changing demographics of LSNA leaders and members. In the late 1980s, LSNA's Board, which had been predominantly Anglo, made an explicit commitment to diversify and to hire a new director committed to building a racially and economically diverse organization. This diversity is represented in LSNA's Executive Committee, which, in the spring of 2000, was composed of the chairperson of LSNA's home daycare network, three former parent mentors who now participate in governance, instruction, and other volunteer activities at their schools, a local school administrator, and a local banker. The six-member committee consisted of four Latinas and two Anglo men.

New York ACORN

ACORN, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, was founded in 1970. It emerged from the National Welfare Rights Organization and expanded its constituency to include moderate-income and working poor families. According to its website, ACORN has grown to become "the nation's largest community organization of low- and moderate-income families, with over 100,000 member families organized into 500 neighborhood chapters in forty cities across the country." ACORN is a multi-issue organization whose work, both nationally and at the local level, centers around affordable housing, living wages for low-wage workers, increasing investment by banks and governments in low-income communities, and improving public schools. ACORN's approach includes "direct action, negotiation, legislation, and voter participation." Funding comes from annual dues from member families, fundraising events, and foundation grants. ACORN members participate in a national convention every other year that focuses on a particular issue of interest to the organization. The Philadelphia convention in June 2000 focused on predatory lending.

New York ACORN was founded in 1981. Its membership comes from across the city, primarily from neighborhoods in Brooklyn, Queens, the South Bronx, and Washington Heights/Harlem. Its over 22,000 members are a cross section of those neighborhoods, mostly African-American, Afro-Caribbean, Puerto Rican, and Dominican. Its members are residents in half of the thirty-two New York City community school districts.

The Schools Office of New York ACORN was founded in 1988 to forward members' growing interest in education issues. The staff of the Schools Office consists of an organizer assigned to each of the three ACORN High Schools and two full-time senior staff who support the work of the organizers. The Schools Office is responsible for the ACORN High Schools as well as the citywide campaigns. Other ACORN staff members also support these wider campaigns. A citywide committee of parents provides oversight to the Schools Office. New York ACORN as a whole is governed by an Executive Committee. New York ACORN shares its Brooklyn office with the National ACORN Schools Office.

Oakland Community Organizations

The Oakland Community Organizations (OCO) has been active in Oakland for nearly thirty years, and has been affiliated since its inception with the Pacific Institute for Community Organizing (PICO), a nationwide network of similar groups. In the beginning, OCO's membership was built through recruitment of individuals from low-income neighborhoods. However, a dozen years ago, OCO shifted from a neighborhood organizing approach to a "faith-based, institutional organizing model," an approach in which congregations are the members of OCO and individuals participate through their membership in one of the member congregations. Each congregation has a "local organizing committee" made up of OCO volunteer leaders.

As of fall 2000, OCO had 35 member congregations representing over 30,000 families from East, West, and North Oakland. For the most part, these congregations are located in the Oakland flatlands, which are low- to moderate-income neighborhoods. The majority of the population in these neighborhoods is Latino and African-American; some Asian groups, such as Filipinos and Vietnamese, as well as a small number of Caucasians, are also represented. The shift to faith-based organizing was significant in diversifying OCO's base racially, ethnically, and economically.

OCO staff in Spring 2000 included an Executive Director, three full-time professional organizers, and one professional organizer shared with the Bay Area Coalition of Equitable Schools (BayCES), as well as support staff. The staff is racially and ethnically diverse: the Executive Director is white; the organizers include two Latinos and one African-American; and the organizer shared with BayCES is white. A Board of Directors representing member congregations governs OCO. Two parent/community leaders, an African-American man and a Latina, are co-chairs of the Board.

The organization works on multiple issues, including affordable housing, crime prevention and safety, drug abuse prevention, and education. The organizing focus is on developing neighborhood leadership and civic participation for the purpose of leveraging resources for Oakland flatlands neighborhoods. Its education organizing began in the early 1990s, first in neighborhood schools, but has expanded to district, city, and state levels.

Appendix B

Locations of Community Organizing Groups

□ School reform organizing groups identified in the Education Organizing Database developed by the Cross City Campaign and Research for Action (146)

● NYU Institute for Education and Social Policy Organizing for School Reform Research Initiative, 8 sites–66 groups

SOURCE

New York University's Institute for Education and Social Policy, et al, 2001, p. 7

Appendix C

Characteristics of the 19 Telephone Survey Groups

Table I: Distribution & Affiliation of the Community Organizing Groups

	LOCATION			AFFILIATION		
Organization Name	State	Urban	Rural	National Network	Independent	University
All Congregations Together	LA	•		PICO		
Alliance Organizing Project	PA	•			•	
Austin Interfaith	TX	•		IAF		
Blocks Together	IL	•		NPA		
Bronx ACORN	NY	•		ACORN		
Challenge West Virginia	WV		•		•	
Logan Square Neighborhood Association	IL	•			•	
Lowell Alliance for Families and Neighborhoods	MA	•			•	
Metro New York	NY	•		IAF		
Milwaukee Inner City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH)	WI	•		Gamaliel		
Mothers on the Move (MOM)	NY	•			•	
Oakland ACORN	CA	•		ACORN		
Oakland Community Organizations	CA	•		PICO		
People Acting for Community Together	FL	•		DART		
Powerful Schools	WA	•			•	
Program for Academic and Cultural Enhancement of Rural Schools (PACERS)	AL		•			•
San Diego Organizing Project	CA	•		PICO		
Southeast Education Task Force	MD	•				•
Southern Echo	MS		•		•	
Summary		16	3	10	7	2

Table II: Age and Constituency of the Community Organizing Groups

	AGE IN YEARS				CONSTITUENCY			
Organization Name	<3	3–5	6–10	>11	African-American	Latino	Caucasian	Other
All Congregations Together			•		•		•	
Alliance Organizing Project		•			•	•	•	
Austin Interfaith				•	•	•	•	•
Blocks Together			•			•	•	
Bronx ACORN		•				•	•	
Challenge West Virginia	•						•	
Logan Square Neighborhood Association				•		•		
Lowell Alliance for Families and Neighborhoods		•			•	•		•
Metro New York				•	•	•	•	
Milwaukee Inner City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH)				•	•	•	•	
Mothers on the Move (MOM)			•		•			
Oakland ACORN				•	•	•		
Oakland Community Organizations				•	•	•		
People Acting for Community Together				•	•	•	•	•
Powerful Schools			•		•		•	•
Program for Academic and Cultural Enhancement of Rural Schools (PACERS)			•		•	•	•	
San Diego Organizing Project				•		•	•	•
Southeast Education Task Force		•			•		•	
Southern Echo			•		•			
Summary	1	4	6	8	14	13	13	5

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Table III: Focus, Scale & Scope of the Work of the Community Organizing Groups

	FOCUS		SCALE			SCOPE	
Organization Name	Multi-Issue	Single Issues	Schools Neighborhoods	City Region District	State	School Change	Policy Change Dist./ST
All Congregations Together	•			•			•
Alliance Organizing Project		•	•	•		•	•
Austin Interfaith	•		•	•	•	•	•
Blocks Together	•		•			•	
Bronx ACORN	•			•			•
Challenge West Virginia		•			•		•
Logan Square Neighborhood Association	•		•			•	
Lowell Alliance for Families and Neighborhoods	•		•	•		•	•
Metro New York	•			•			•
Milwaukee Inner City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH)	•		•	•			•
Mothers on the Move (MOM)	•		•	•		•	•
Oakland ACORN	•		•	•		•	•
Oakland Community Organizations	•		•	•	•	•	•
People Acting for Community Together	•			•			•
Powerful Schools		•	•			•	•
Program for Academic and Cultural Enhancement of Rural Schools (PACERS)		•	•		•		•
San Diego Organizing Project	•		•			•	•
Southeast Education Task Force		•	•			•	
Southern Echo	•			•			•
Summary	14	5	13	12	4	11	16

Table IV: Staffing & Funding Levels of the Community Organizing Groups

	STAFF			FUNDING		
Organization Name	<5	5–10	>10	100,000–250,000	251,000–400,000	401,000–900,000
All Congregations Together		•		•		
Alliance Organizing Project		•			•	
Austin Interfaith	•			•		
Blocks Together		•			•	
Bronx ACORN		•			•	
Challenge West Virginia	•			•		
Logan Square Neighborhood Association*			•			•
Lowell Alliance for Families and Neighborhoods		•		•		
Metro New York		•			•	
Milwaukee Inner City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH)	•			•		
Mothers on the Move (MOM)		•			•	
Oakland ACORN		•			•	
Oakland Community Organizations		•			•	
People Acting for Community Together	•			•		
Powerful Schools*		•				•
Program for Academic and Cultural Enhancement of Rural Schools (PACERS)**			•	•		
San Diego Organizing Project	•			•		
Southeast Education Task Force	•			•		
Southern Echo		•				•
Summary	6	11	2	9	7	3

*Logan Square & Powerful Schools support significant program budgets.

**It is likely that many "staff" receive university salaries.

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Appendix D

Indicators Project National Advisory Group

Henry Allen[II]
HYAMS FOUNDATION

Drew Astolfi[II]

Leah Meyer Austin[II]
W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION

Joseph Colletti[II]
UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Oralia Garza de Cortes[I,II]
INDUSTRIAL AREAS FOUNDATION

Cyrus Driver[II]
FORD FOUNDATION

Fred Frelow[II]
ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

Zoe Gillett[I]
CHARLES STEWART MOTT FOUNDATION

Paul Heckman[I,II]
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Tammy Johnson[II]
APPLIED RESEARCH CENTER

Steve Kest[I,II]
ACORN

Pauline Lipman[II]
DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

Gabriel Medel[I]
PARENTS FOR UNITY

Hayes Mizell [I,II]
EDNA MCCONNELL CLARK FOUNDATION

Janice Petrovich[I]
FORD FOUNDATION

Amanda Rivera[II]
AMES MIDDLE SCHOOL

Gary Rodwell[I]

Lucy Ruiz [I,II]
ALLIANCE ORGANIZING PROJECT

Minerva Camarena Skeith[II]
AUSTIN INTERFAITH

Rochelle Nichols Solomon[I,II]

Cross City Campaign Staff

Chris Brown

Anne C. Hallett

Lupe Prieto

Research for Action Staff

Eva Gold

Elaine Simon

[I] Phase one Advisory Group member
[II] Phase two Advisory Group member

Appendix E

The Education Organizing Indicators Framework

The Education Organizing Indicators Framework includes eight areas in which community organizing for school reform makes a significant contribution. We have organized these areas into charts (see below) that illustrate the work of community organizing in each of the areas: Leadership Development, Community Power, Social Capital, Public Accountability, Equity, School/Community Connection, School Climate, and High Quality Instruction and Curriculum.

In each indicator area there are three to five primary strategies. The charts list representative organizing strategies under each, results from these strategies, and data sources that could be used to document the results. Here we use an excerpt from the chart for Equity to illustrate how to read the charts.

Equity

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1 Increase funding and resources to under-resourced schools	
• Campaigns for new buildings and renovations to reduce overcrowding and increase safety • Make the case for and win allocation of funds for adult education and after-school programs • Write grants to raise private and public funds for schools and/or reform groups to provide teacher professional development.	• New school facilities, buildings, and annexes • Increased money for lighting, crossing guards, playgrounds, etc. • Increased professional development opportunities for teachers
DATA SOURCES • School District facilities and personnel budgets • Neighborhood/city/District crime incident reports	• Grant proposals • Survey of school buildings and related facilities • Survey of parents and teachers • School schedules and programs

In the column on the left, in bold, is a primary strategy that community organizing groups use to address equity: *Increase funding and resources to under-resourced schools.* Listed below the primary strategy are three representative strategies that community organizing groups use to increase funding: they wage campaigns for new buildings and renovations, make the case for funds for adult education and after-school programs, and/or write grants to increase funding for teacher professional development.

In the right column, we provide examples of the results of these efforts: new school construction and renovations, increased numbers of crossing guards, improved lighting and safer playgrounds, and increased professional development opportunities for teachers. In our visits to community organizing groups they pointed out new and updated facilities, and we heard from parents and teachers that accidents and incidences in the school vicinity had decreased. At a number of sites we talked to principals and teachers refreshed by new professional development experiences, which they connected to the efforts made by community organizing groups. They had new visions for their schools and/or were enthusiastic about new approaches they were trying in their classrooms.

Listed beneath the Strategies and Results columns are sources for systematically documenting results, including school, city and neighborhood records as well as surveys, district data, interviews and observations.

We constructed the Education Organizing Indicators Framework through interviews with nineteen groups in which we asked them about their strategies and accomplishments and refined it through case studies with five of the groups. Although the Framework illustrates the work of education organizing in each of the indicator areas, it is not to be used as a checklist, nor to prescribe what a community organizing group ought to be doing. It is important to start with the actual stories of education organizing, letting the indicator areas serve as a lens for interpreting them. The Framework is a means to categorize the accomplishments of a group—a tool that can help community organizing groups make sense of their efforts to broader audiences and to help these audiences understand the role of community organizing in improving schools.

Even though the strategies and results in the Framework reflect the successes of the nineteen groups, the Framework is not inclusive of the totality of community organizing for school reform. Both the groups we studied and new groups will want to add strategies to existing indicator areas and perhaps even add new areas to the Framework that we did not uncover during our research. The Framework is meant to grow with the field.

Foundation program officers, educators, and organizers and leaders of community organizing groups all should find the Framework useful. Foundation program officers, for example, can use it to address the question, *How can I know that community organizing for school reform is making a difference?* The Framework should help funders: to become more knowledgeable about the work in general; to consider funding requests by using the indicator areas as a way of understanding the work of groups applying for support; to help identify the accomplishments of community organizing groups and the areas in which their work is focused; and to help interpret the work of a community organizing group in terms of the scale at which a group is working. Educators' questions differ from that of funders. Educators may be interested in knowing: *How can community organizing for school reform help me and what difference does community organizing make for schools and students?* The Framework should help educators: to become more knowledgeable about the work in general; to understand where the work of community organizing overlaps with and/or is complementary to their own efforts; to understand the areas in which community organizing is working that educators, themselves, cannot. Organizers and leaders have yet other questions. They want to know, *How can I do this work better and how can I communicate better to audiences not familiar with community organizing?* The Framework should be useful to leaders and organizers: in establishing a common language to describe their work and as a tool for reflection on their efforts.

The Education Organizing Indicators Framework

Leadership Development

Leadership Development builds the knowledge and skills of parents and community members (and sometimes teachers, principals and students) to create agendas for school improvement.

Leadership development is personally empowering, as parents and community members take on public roles. Leaders heighten their civic participation and sharpen their skills in leading meetings, interviewing public officials, representing the community at public events and with the media, and negotiating with those in power.

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1 Identify and train parents and community members (and sometimes teachers, principals, and students) to take on leadership roles	
• Develop parent and community knowledge base through trainings, research, reflection, and evaluation • Provide opportunities for parents and community members to attend conferences, make cross-site school visits, etc. • Create opportunities and training for parents and community members to be organizational leaders, to be leaders on local school councils, principal selection committees, etc.	• Parents and/or community members hold leadership positions • Parents and community members hold positions in organization's governance and/or are organizers in community organizing groups • Parents and community members feel knowledgeable about their role in school reform and in the process for making change
2 Develop parents (and community members, teachers, principals, and students) as politically engaged citizens	
• Develop the skills of civic engagement (e.g., public speaking research, negotiation, reflection, and evaluation) • Hold public accountability sessions with elected leaders and reflect/evaluate power dynamics afterwards • Organize get-out-the-vote and/or withhold-the-vote campaigns	• Parents, youth, and school staff demonstrate confidence and ability in leading meetings, designing agendas, public speaking, etc. • Politicians are aware of issues that concern parents, youth, and school staff and are responsive to them • Parents, youth, and school staff demonstrate knowledge about school systems and the ability to make strategic decisions
3 Promote individual, family, and community empowerment	
• Support in setting individual educational and career goals • Coaching in public speaking, letter writing, petitioning, etc. • Training in organizing skills (e.g., how to do one-on-ones, house meetings, active listening, reflection, and evaluation) • Creating learning experiences (e.g., training, conferences, site visits, etc.)	• Parents, students, teachers, etc. perceive themselves as gaining knowledge, confidence, and skills • Parents, students, teachers demonstrate increasing skill in organizing and confidence in leadership capacity • Parents are pursing their own education and/or employment opportunities
DATA SOURCES • Interviews/surveys of parents, students, teachers • Stories about personal change	• Observation of organizational and public events • Media coverage of parent and community leadership in school reform and in community change

Community Power

Community Power means that residents of low-income neighborhoods gain influence to win the resources and policy changes needed to improve their schools and neighborhoods. Community power emerges when groups act strategically and collectively. Powerful community groups build a large base of constituents, form partnerships for legitimacy and expertise, and have the clout to draw the attention of political leaders and the media to their agenda.

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1 Create a mass base constituency within communities that results in deep membership commitment and large turnout	
• Identify shared community and parent self- interest through one-on-ones, house meetings, school based teams, and congregation based committees • Ensure that community interests drive community organizing through member participation in organizational leadership and governance	• Ability to turn-out membership base • Public leaders perceive groups as a political player • Group is perceived as an authentic community voice within the community and by district and political leaders • Ability to sustain a campaign overtime
2 Form partnerships for legitimacy and expertise	
• Establish mutually beneficial working relations with other groups with shared interests (e.g., school reform groups, other community-based groups, a teachers' union, academic, and other groups that can provide technical assistance, etc.) • Work in coalition at city and state levels around common issues • Encourage collaboration among neighborhood schools, social service agencies, and congregations	• Other groups perceive the community organizing groups as a valuable partners representing a grassroots constituency • Community organizing groups, with partners, gain a seat at policy decision-making tables
3 Create a strong organizational identity	
• Develop stories of leadership and success • Practice reflection and evaluation leading to shared sense of accomplishments and next steps • Document successes through packets of media clippings, etc.	• Leaders, members, and organizers share a stock of stories that create a history of their accomplishments • Parents and community members see their values and concerns guiding the organizing • Media coverage reflects the work and accomplishments of community organizing to school reform
4 Draw political attention to the organization's agenda	
• Research issues and report findings in written and oral reports that are accessible to the media and general public • Hold one-on-ones with politicians and district leaders • Hold accountability sessions with public leaders • Letter writing, petitioning, and lobbying	• Political and district leaders acknowledge issues important to community organizing groups, meet with members and show up for accountability sessions • Media acknowledges role of community organizing group in school reform and its influence on policy
DATA SOURCES • Attendance records of public events • Media coverage	• Interviews/surveys of politicians and district leaders • "Stories" about the groups • Group documents, newsletters, etc • Observations of public events

Social Capital

Social Capital refers to networks of mutual obligation and trust, both interpersonal and inter-group, that can be activated to leverage resources to address community concerns. Some groups call this "relational" power while others describe this process as one of building "political capital." Beginning with relationships among neighborhood residents and within local institutions, community organizing groups bring together people who might not otherwise associate with each other, either because of cultural and language barriers (e.g., Latinos, African-Americans, and Asian-Americans) or because of their different roles and positions, such as teachers, school board members, and parents. Creating settings for these "bridging relationships" in which issues are publicly discussed is the key to moving a change agenda forward.

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1 Build networks	
• Organize and support parents at school level and across schools • Build school/community education committees • Foster principal groups • Form citywide alliances	• Turn-out composed of multiple constituencies and represent different racial/ethnic/linguistic groups • Parents and students at local schools perceive they can count on larger group membership for support • Reduced feelings of isolation
2 Build relationships of mutual trust and reciprocity	
• Increase the interaction between teachers and parents (e.g., home visits, neighborhood walks, joint planning for new programs and/or schools, co-decision-making) • Strengthen the connection between local congregations and schools by identifying complementary roles	• Increased perception of teachers/school staff and parents/students of mutual support • Teachers and principals perceive community groups and congregations as advocates and resources
3 Increase participation in civic life	
• Support parent, youth, and community involvement in the political process (e.g., petitions, letter writing, meeting with public officials, testimony at school board meetings, get-out-the-vote campaigns, etc.) • Sponsor public accountability sessions with elected, district, and other civic leaders • Support parents holding positions on school committees, community boards, etc.	• Parents and community members are spokespeople for the groups • Increase participation of parents, community members, and students on school committees, community boards, and other voluntary activities and institutions in their neighborhoods (e.g., clubs, religious congregation, social action, etc.)
DATA SOURCES	
• Interviews/surveys of parents, students and school staff, political and district leaders	• Observation and attendance records of public meetings and events • Records of voter turnout, petition drives, etc.

Public Accountability

Public Accountability entails a broad acknowledgement of and commitment to solving the problems of public education. It is built on the assumption that public education is a collective responsibility. Community organizing groups work to create public settings for differently-positioned school stakeholders—educators, parents, community members, elected and other public officials, the private and non-profit sectors, and students themselves—to identify problems and develop solutions for improving schools in low- to moderate-income communities. Through this public process, community organizing groups hold officials accountable to respond to the needs of low- to moderate-income communities.

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1 Create a public conversation about public education and student achievement	
• Identify shared parent concerns through one-on-one interviews and house meetings • Create a shared vision of reform among parents, teachers, and administrators through site visits, neighborhood walks, local school councils, etc. • Create pressure for release of school data • Hold public meetings with district and elected officials	• Increase in public dialogue about issues facing schools in low-income neighborhoods and about parent concerns • Media coverage of inequities • District data on schools and student performance become public
2 Monitor programs and policies	
• Conduct studies which show whether district is delivering on promises for new, high level courses • Bring legal action to force compliance with federal civil rights law • Push for shared decision-making and participation on local school councils • Serve on citizen review boards	• The roles of parents and community expand from problem identification to problem solving and monitoring results
3 Participate in the political arena	
• Engage in one-on-ones with candidates and elected officials • Develop education campaigns and petition drives • Hold accountability sessions with elected and other officials • Organize get-out-the-vote and/or withhold-the-vote campaigns	• Development of vocal community groups • Elected officials feel accountable to local groups for public education • Strategic use of the vote around school issues
4 Create joint ownership/relational culture	
• Create and/or participate in structures (local school councils, core teams, etc.) that bring school staff, parents, and students together as school leaders and co-decision-makers • Develop community-wide planning procedures (e.g., education committees with teachers, parents, administrators, and community members)	• School staff, parents, and community groups see themselves as collaborators in children's school experience and feel mutually accountable for student learning • Parents feel knowledgeable about schools and school systems • Teachers feel knowledgeable about local families, the community, and their educational goals and expectations for their children
DATA SOURCES	
• Interviews/surveys of parents, teachers, administrators, and elected officials • Minutes and attendance records of public events, school committees, etc.	• Media reports • Observation of events, meetings, etc. • Research studies produced by the groups

Equity

Equity guarantees that all children, regardless of socio-economic status, race or ethnicity, have the resources and opportunities they need to become strong learners, to achieve in school, and to succeed in the work world. Often, providing equitable opportunities requires more than equalizing the distribution of resources. Community organizing groups push for resource allocation that takes into account poverty and neglect, so that schools in low-income areas receive priority. In addition, groups work to increase the access of students from these schools to strong academic programs.

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1 Increase funding and resources to under-resourced schools	
• Campaigns for new buildings and renovations to reduce overcrowding and increase safety • Make the case for and win allocation of funds for adult education and after-school programs • Write grant proposals to raise private and public funds for schools and/or reform groups to provide teacher professional development.	• New school facilities buildings and annexes • Increased money for: lighting, crossing guards, playgrounds, etc. • Increased professional development opportunities for teachers
2 Maximize access of low-income children to educational opportunities	
• Increase focus on reading through reading campaigns and programs such as Links to Literacy, etc. • Establish small autonomous schools and autonomous high schools	• Increased resources (books, professional development, etc.) to support reading and children reading more both in school and at home • New small schools open • Autonomous high schools established offering new options
3 Match teaching and learning conditions with those in the best schools	
• Document absence of academic courses • Site visits to identify "best" practices • Support salary increases for teachers and reduced class size.	• New incentives in place to attract and retain teachers • Improved adult-child ratios in classrooms • Higher level courses offered
DATA SOURCES • School district facilities and personnel budgets • Neighborhood/city/District crime incident reports	• Grant proposals • Survey of school buildings and related facilities • Survey of parents and teachers • School schedules and programs

School/Community Connection

School/Community Connection requires that schools become institutions that work with parents and the community to educate children. Such institutional change requires that professionals value the skills and knowledge of community members. In this model, parents and local residents serve as resources for schools and schools extend their missions to become community centers offering the educational, social service, and recreational programs local residents need and desire.

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1 Create multi-use school buildings	
• Create support for schools being used as places for adult and child learning and recreation (e.g., GED and ESL classes, family counseling, after-school programs, health clinics, etc.)	• Greater number and variety of community-oriented programs in the school
• Increase use of school during non-school hours (e.g., evening meetings of parents and community groups)	• Greater use of the school building as a public space
2 Position the community as a resource	
• Campaigns to support school reform (e.g., new small schools and new resources [books, computers, etc.])	• School staff perceive community participation as adding value to the school
• After-school programs are parent- and community-led	• Increased awareness of school staff to community issues and the assets of a community
• Create new roles for parents (e.g., parents as after-school teachers and classroom mentors)	
3 Create multiple roles for parents in schools	
• Provide resources and training for parents to enable them to take on leadership roles (e.g., on local school councils, school improvement committees, small school design teams, hiring committees, bilingual committees, etc.)	• Increase in the variety of roles parents take on in schools
	• Parents feel welcome, valued, and respected in the school
4 Create joint ownership of schools and school decision-making	
• Advocate for joint parent-teacher professional development, partnerships to address mutual concerns (e.g., safety, bilingual education, overcrowding)	• Increase in number of programs/schools that result from parent, teacher, community, principal collaboration
• Push for site-based decision-making that includes teachers, parents, and principal in the process	• Parents, teachers, and principal share language and vision for schools
	• Parents are knowledgeable about academic, personnel, and school policy issues and school staff are knowledgeable about and/or participate in community group and its education reform campaigns
DATA SOURCES	
• Interviews/surveys with parents, school staff, organizations	• Media account of community involvement in school reform
• School roster of activities	• School and community newsletters
• Observations of activities at the school	

Positive School Climate

Positive School Climate is a basic requirement for teaching and learning. It is one in which teachers feel they know their students and families well, and in which there is mutual respect and pride in the school. Community organizing groups often begin their organizing for school improvement by addressing safety in and around the school and the need for improved facilities. Reducing school and class size is another way in which community organizing groups seek to create positive school climates.

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1 Improve facilities	
• Get funds allocated for new and renovated school buildings and playgrounds	• Parents, teachers, and community members feel pride in school
• School beautification and cleanliness campaigns	• New buildings and annexes
2 Improve safety in and around the school	
• Work to improve traffic patterns in school areas, lighting, etc.	• Reduced number of traffic accidents and incidents
• Increase crossing guards and create community-sponsored adult patrols in school area	• Reduced number of violent, drug, and/or gang related incidents in or around school area
• Increase parent presence in halls and classrooms	• Reduced number of disciplinary actions
3 Create respectful school environment	
• Sponsor programs that encourage parents and teachers to work together around student learning (e.g., classroom mentors, after-school programs, curriculum committees, etc.)	• Increased perception of parents as partners in children's education
• Pressure for parents to be co-decision-makers with educators	• Curriculum reflects concerns and issues that community faces
• Encourage local cultures and languages to be part of school	• Signage in school in native languages as well as English; office staff and others who can communicate in native language
4 Build intimate settings for teacher/ student relations	
• Bring parents into classrooms to reduce adult-student ratio	• Teachers believe they know students and parents better
• Establish small autonomous schools	• Students perceive that teachers care about them and are aware of their progress
• Support small classroom size	• Parents believe teachers understand and respect their children
DATA SOURCES	
• Interviews/surveys with parents, teachers, and students	• Observation of the school
• Neighborhood/city/district accident/crime reports	• School discipline records including suspensions and expulsions
• District/school records on school and classroom size	

High Quality Instruction and Curriculum

High Quality Instruction and Curriculum indicate classroom practices that provide challenging learning opportunities that also reflect the values and goals of parents and the community. Community organizing groups work to create high expectations for all children and to provide professional development for teachers to explore new ideas, which may include drawing on the local community's culture and involving parents as active partners in their children's education.

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1 Identify learning needs, carry out research, and implement new teaching initiatives and structures	
• Take parents and teachers to visit schools utilizing innovative approaches and/or that are "small" schools • Train parents to work in classrooms and train teachers how to best utilize parents as partners in teaching and learning • Form partnerships with groups with expertise in teaching and learning and school reform • Research different approaches to reading and campaign for implementation of those identified as successful • Research district bilingual policies	• Increase in parent and teacher knowledge about strategies and conditions that lead to improved school performance • New approaches to teaching and learning (e.g., in reading) and new school structures are implemented (e.g., small schools) • Increase in attention to children needing additional academic and social support, including bilingual students
2 Enhance staff professionalism	
• Document need and call for greater spending on professional development; obtain grants for teacher professional development • Campaign for incentives to attract teachers to low-performing schools • Foster collegial relations (e.g., long-term planning committees, cross-classroom observation, team teaching, etc.) • Provide training to teachers on making home visits, taking neighborhood walks, etc.	• Increase in teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge and feelings of being supported as professionals • Increase in number of credentialed teachers choosing to teach in low-performing schools and teacher retention at those schools • Increase in collaboration among teachers, (e.g., teaming, interdisciplinary curriculum, etc.)
3 Make parents and community partners in children's education	
• Increase parent understanding of school culture • Provide parent training for work in classrooms and after-school programs • Support and/or create settings where parents and teachers work together and are co-decision-makers (e.g., school design teams, hiring committees, curriculum committees, community education committees, local school councils, etc.)	• Parents perceive themselves as standing with teachers and not as being isolated or outsiders • Teachers perceive the local community as a resource • Increase in interaction among parents, teachers, and students
4 Hold high expectations	
• Make demands for rigorous curriculum and/or establish new schools with rigorous curriculum • Require that schools publicly demonstrate improvement	• Improved test scores and/or results on alternative assessments • Greater acceptance levels at magnet schools • Improved graduation rates
DATA SOURCES	
• Interviews/surveys with teachers, administrators, and parents • School/District/Union records on incentives for teachers, teacher assignments, and teacher retention • Standardized test scores and results of alternative assessments • Schools and classroom observations	• District/School records on teacher and principal professional development • School/District records on acceptance into magnet programs, graduation rates, etc.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Eva Gold, Ph.D., Principal, Research for Action, has served over the last decade as primary investigator of numerous local and national studies examining the dynamics among parent, community, and schools. Recently, she coauthored a major report, *Clients, Consumers or Collaborators? Parents and Their Roles in School Reform During Children Achieving, 1995-2000*, that is part of the overall evaluation of Philadelphia's systemic reform effort. She is a Guest Lecturer in the Urban Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania, where she teaches a course in Community Activism and School Reform. She was the recipient of the Ralph C. Preston Dissertation Award from the Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania in 2000 for her study of the work a community organizing group did with parents at a neighborhood high school. This study extends her work of the last ten years in following the development of community organizing for school reform.

Elaine Simon, Ph.D., a Senior Research Associate at Research for Action, is an anthropologist who has conducted ethnographic research and evaluation in the fields of education, employment and training, and community development. She is Co-Director of Urban Studies in the School of Arts and Sciences and adjunct Associate Professor of Education in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Her perspective on education is informed by her background in urban studies and community development. She followed the early 1990s Chicago education reform that devolved power to communities and parents and later the ambitious systemic school reform effort in Philadelphia. Her current research on community organizing for school reform builds on that knowledge and benefits from her broad perspective on urban life and urban school reform.

Chris Brown is the Director of the Schools and Community Program at the Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform. The Schools and Community Program works with parent and community organizations to increase meaningful parent and community involvement in school reform. He is responsible for providing training and technical assistance to organizations, overseeing research and publication projects, and coordinating cross-site visits. Before coming to Cross City, he served as Community Development Specialist at Chicago's United Way/Crusade of Mercy. Previously, he spent seven years as director of the ACORN Housing Corporation of Illinois, a non-profit group providing home ownership opportunities for low and moderate-income families in Chicago's Englewood community. In addition to his professional work with schools and communities, he also serves as a parent volunteer on the Local School Council of Boone School, the Chicago elementary school his two children attend.

Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform is a national network of school reform leaders from nine cities: Baltimore, Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Oakland, Philadelphia and Seattle. The Cross City Campaign is made up of parents, community members, teachers, principals, central office administrators, researchers, union officials, and funders working together for the systemic transformation of urban public schools, in order to improve quality and equity so that all urban youth are well-prepared for post-secondary education, work, and citizenship.

Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform
407 South Dearborn, Suite 1500, Chicago, IL 60605
Telephone: 312.322.4880 Fax: 312.322.4885
www.crosscity.org

Research for Action (RFA) is a Philadelphia-based non-profit organization engaged in education research and reform. Founded in 1992, RFA works with educators, students, parents, and community members to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for all students. RFA work falls along a continuum of highly participatory research and evaluation to more traditional policy studies.

Research for Action
3701 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104
Telephone: 215.823.2500 Fax: 215.823.2510
www.researchforaction.org

PHOTO CREDITS

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ORDINARY PEOPLE CAN INDEED BEGIN TO TRANSFORM THE INSTITUTION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TO MAKE IT MORE EQUITABLE AND RESPONSIVE.

PUBLICATIONS IN THE
INDICATORS PROJECT SERIES

Strong Neighborhoods, Strong Schools

- Successful Community Organizing for School Reform
  Appendix: Case Studies
  The Education Organizing Indicators Framework
  Executive Summary

Case Studies
Alliance Organizing Project
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Oakland Community Organizations

CROSS CITY CAMPAIGN FOR URBAN SCHOOL REFORM

PREPARED BY RESEARCH FOR ACTION

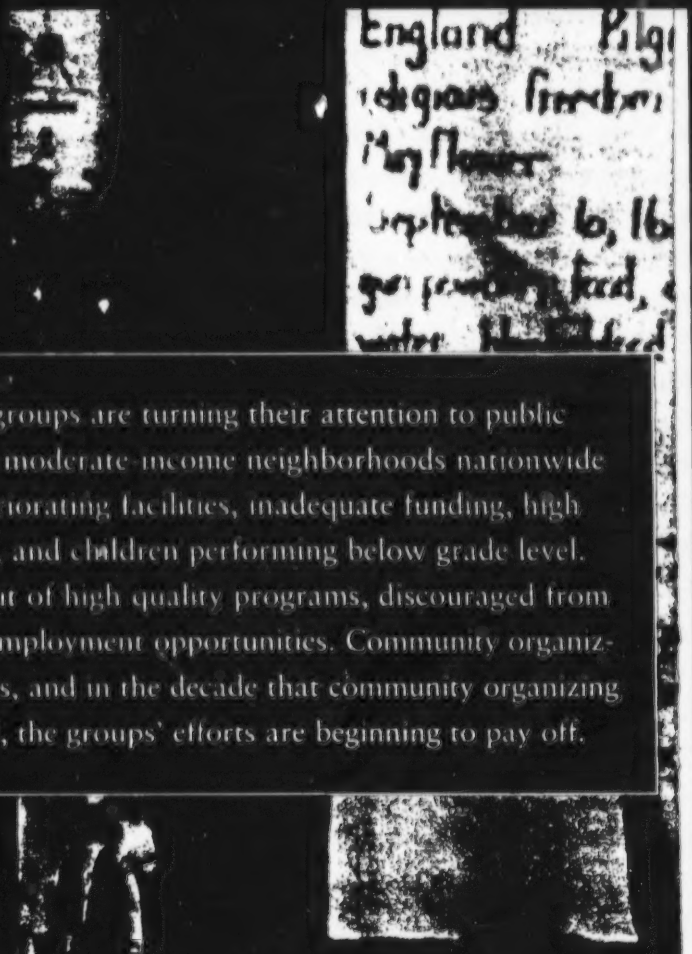
Successful Community Organizing
for School Reform: Executive Summary

Strong Neighborhood Strong Schools

The Indicators Project on Education Organizing

65

Executive Summary



Across the country, community organizing groups are turning their attention to public education. Urban public schools in low- to moderate-income neighborhoods nationwide face similar problems—overcrowding, deteriorating facilities, inadequate funding, high staff turnover, lack of up-to-date textbooks, and children performing below grade level. Students attending these schools are shut out of high quality programs, discouraged from going to college, and shortchanged in their employment opportunities. Community organizing groups have begun to address these issues, and in the decade that community organizing for school reform has taken hold and spread, the groups' efforts are beginning to pay off.

The prevailing belief is that transforming schools and improving student performance is beyond the scope of community organizations. In fact, urban educators frequently see communities as the problem. Operating in the professional paradigm of schools, those who make policy for and run public schools often discount the insights of parents and community members, especially when it comes to what goes on in the classroom, because they believe that parents lack education credentials. Even when the efforts of community organizing groups have contributed to school change, their accomplishments remain invisible because the credit goes to the politicians and/or educators whose responsibility it is to carry out the hard won improvements.

This study, like those of a few other researchers, advances a new paradigm of school reform. The new paradigm departs from models of school reform that look simply at what is happening inside schools and school systems, to look at work that creates a positive dynamic between communities and schools.

The charge of this study was to identify indicators of the impact of community organizing for school reform, in order to make the contributions of organized parents and communities visible to wider audiences. For over two years we documented the education organizing of five groups: the Alliance Organizing Project (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Austin Interfaith (Austin, Texas), Logan Square Neighborhood Association (Chicago, Illinois), New York ACORN (New York, New York), and Oakland Community Organizations (Oakland, California). In the Indicators Project series, Strong Neighborhoods, Strong Schools, we provide a methodology for understanding the contributions of community organizing to school reform and a set of illustrative case studies. In the report, Successful Community Organizing for School Reform, we present an Education Organizing Indicators Framework that highlights strategies and accomplishments of education organizing. We also describe a Theory of Change that shows how the work of community organizing groups creates a process that leads from increased community capacity to improved student learning.

The studies show that when school reform goes hand-in-hand with building strong communities, schooling itself changes fundamentally, increasing the chances that reform will be carried out and sustained.

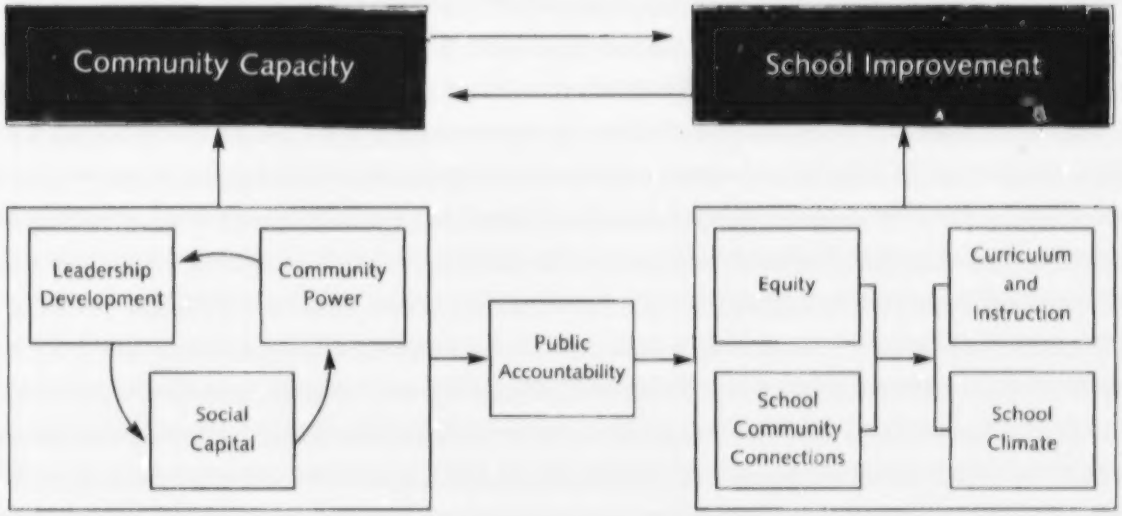
The Indicator Areas

We identified eight indicator areas—broad categories that describe the work of education organizing—in which accomplishments can be identified. The eight indicator areas are: *leadership development, community power, social capital, public accountability, equity, school/community connection, positive school climate and high quality curriculum and instruction.* We refer to this set of eight indicator areas as the Education Organizing Indicators Framework to emphasize the importance of seeing the indicator areas as interrelated and interconnected areas of work that together contribute to a change process.

The Theory of Change

Based on an analysis of education organizing in the five case study sites, we developed a theory of change that explains how accomplishments in the indicator areas leads to improved schools and stronger student achievement.

Theory of Change: Relationship of Community Capacity Building and School Improvement



The theory of change model shows the pathway of influence between building community capacity and school improvement. Work in three indicator areas—leadership development, community power, and social capital—increases civic participation and leverages power through partnerships and relationships within and across communities, as well as with school district, civic, and elected officials. Public accountability is the hinge that connects community capacity with school improvement. Increased community participation and strong relationships together broaden accountability for improving public education for children of low- to moderate-income families. Public accountability creates the political will to forward equity and school/community connection, thereby improving school climate, curriculum, and instruction making them more responsive to communities, laying the basis for improved student learning and achievement. Stronger schools, in turn, contribute to strengthening community capacity.

Community organizing groups develop parent and community leadership and build community power. These achievements produce social capital. The dynamic of leadership, power and social capital results in broadened accountability for children's school success. When educators, parents, community members, and politicians feel mutually accountable, finding solutions to the problems of urban schools becomes a collective responsibility, lessening the tendency of parents and educators to blame each other for school failure and those within school and political bureaucracies to dodge their responsibilities. This process creates the political will that enables community organizing groups to forward issues of equity and school/community connection and bring new influences to bear on school climate and curriculum and instruction. When there is broad public acknowledgement that equity and school/community connection are important goals, resources for schools in low-income areas become more plentiful and schools often turn into centers of the community. Respectful relationships among parents and teachers and students can develop, expanding ownership for the educational experience of children. Expectations for children are raised as teachers see that parents care about their children's education. The potential increases as well for curriculum and instruction that is both rigorous and culturally responsive.

Influences on Community Organizing

No two organizing efforts look alike. Understanding the influences on organizing activity helps to make sense of how it plays out across settings and how activities taking place at particular moments relate to larger efforts. It also helps to create appropriate expectations for outcomes. By looking across the five case study groups we identified four areas that need to be considered to make sense of any particular community organizing effort.

- The overall **region, state, city, and district context** in which a community organizing group is working shapes its strategies and to some extent, its outcomes.

- Although the case study groups share a common organizing heritage, there is a range of **organizational characteristics** among community organizing groups, from how they recruit members to their role in implementing programs, with implications for the size of their constituent base and the kinds of training and expertise available for their education work.

- There are many **phases of an organizing campaign**, and recognizing the phase of a campaign in which a group is working or where an activity fits into a campaign is critical for seeing its relevance to a wider effort with larger goals.

- Community organizing groups are always balancing **work at multiple system levels**. Work at the local level is important for building the base of constituents and the capacity to implement change efforts. Local changes however, also require supportive policies at the city, district or state levels.

The Added Value to School Reform

Community organizing does not provide a prescription for a particular educational program or restructuring approach, and it does not take the place of these kinds of ideas. Nor are community organizing groups alone in the field of external groups exerting influence on school reform. The unique role of community organizing in education reform is to build community capacity and link that to school improvement through public accountability. The indicator areas we have identified as associated with community capacity (leadership development, community power, and social capital) and public accountability are almost totally absent in the work of school reform as it is usually defined.

Even where there is overlap with the work of educators and reform experts—in the areas of equity, school/community connections, curriculum and instruction, and school climate—community organizing adds a critical dimension that otherwise would be missing. Community organizing groups are rooted in neighborhoods and have a long-term commitment to the support of local families. They see schools as tied to other issues that need attention and improvement, and their constituents are deeply affected and angry when public institutions are ineffective in meeting their needs. As a result, community organizing groups add value to school reform efforts by:

- Sustaining the vision and momentum for change over time
- Persisting despite obstacles and setbacks
- Building political capital and creating the political will that motivates officials to take action
- Producing authentic change in policies and programs that reflects the concerns of parents and community members

Challenges and Recommendations for Extending and Supporting Education Organizing

Education organizing holds much promise for reframing school reform in the new paradigm that connects communities and schools. Nonetheless, there are a host of reasons why work in the education field is challenging, including the scale necessary to make a difference, resistance to change, the highly charged political environment, and the difficulty of identifying measures of impact that everyone can agree upon. With these challenges in mind, we make the following recommendations to support and extend the work of education organizing:

1. Build Organizational Capacity and Infrastructure: Community organizing needs funding to be able to attract and retain experienced organizers by being able to offer adequate salary and benefits. They need multi-year funding to conserve their resources and assure continuity of effort over time. They need to be able to purchase the services of technical assistance groups, pay for conference attendance, and access other opportunities for learning.

2. Supporting School/Community Connections-Reframing the Paradigm: Community organizing needs the active support of funders and others who believe in the critical role of parents and community in transforming schools. Funders can: bring together the foundation "wings" of community building and school reform; use both measures of community capacity as well as measures of school improvement in assessing community organizing efforts; and initiate dialogue about the value added by community organizing groups to school reform through convening conferences and linking differently positioned groups.

3. Expand Expertise and Legitimacy: Community organizing groups need to develop education expertise in order to become "players" in the education sphere. Funders can: support strategic assistance to community organizing groups by facilitating networking with technical assistance groups; support the growth of technical assistance groups to meet the needs of community organizing groups; and sponsor training for organizers and community constituents, including how to work with the media.

4. Document Success: The Indicators Project started with a small group of funders and school reform activists who believed that if community organizing for school reform was to be credible, then a methodology needed to be developed to document its accomplishments and show how these accomplishments lead to improved student learning. Funders can play an important role in supporting and developing strategies to take the learnings from this study to broader audiences, including other funders, educators and the academic community. Funders can also continue support for further investigation and refinement of measures of the accomplishments of the groups.

The Power of Ordinary People

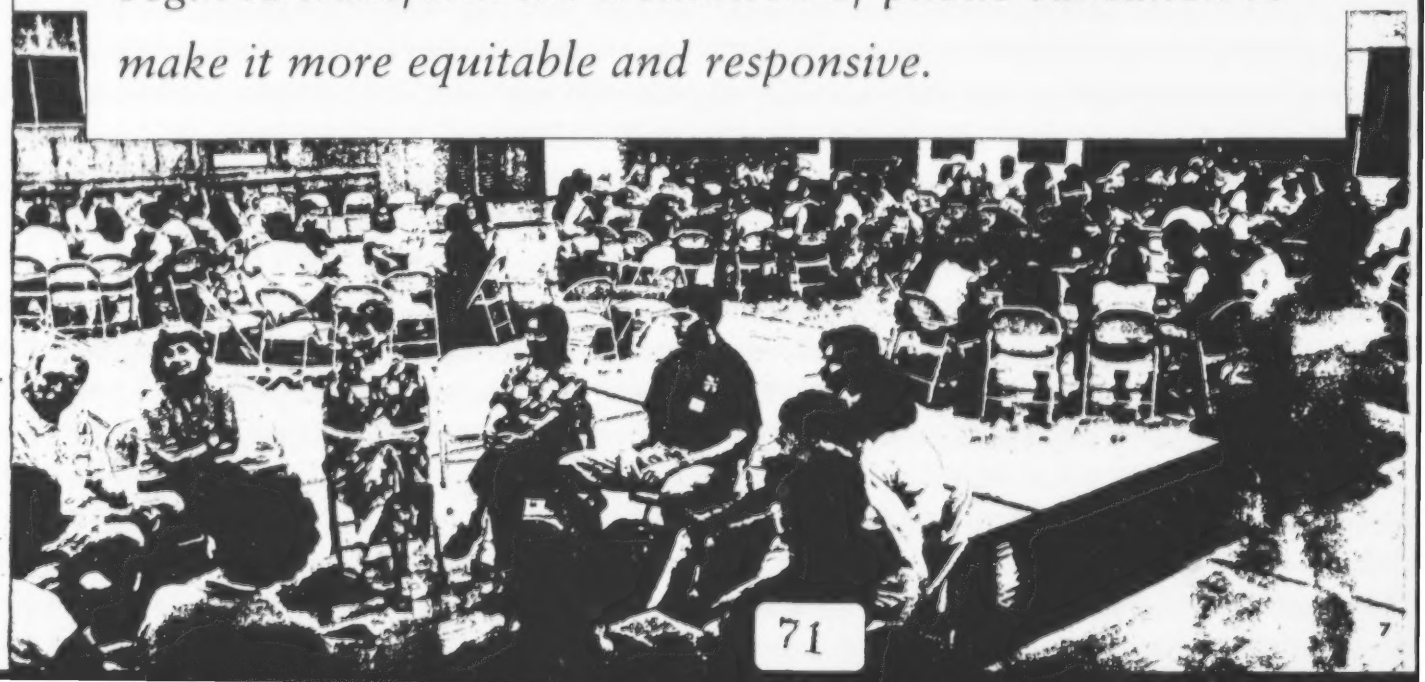
Writing about a 1989 trip to Chicago, the historian Michael B. Katz described his amazement upon hearing that state law had radically decentralized the city's school system, giving parents and community members a significant hand in running their local schools. His previous studies of the history of American education had led him to understand that the dominant form in public schooling—professionalized and bureaucratic—was not inevitable. Before bureaucratized forms came to dominate American education, they had once vied with a more democratic approach. From his historian's perspective, Katz wondered if he was witnessing a momentous turn of events. *"I wanted to know if the course of school reform would sustain my faith in the capacity of ordinary people to manage their schools and in the liberating effects of shedding bureaucratic weight."*[1]

We are in agreement with those who say schools cannot do it alone. The discourse on school reform needs to go beyond what happens inside schools to include the dynamic between schools and communities.

NOTES

1. Michael B. Katz, Improving Poor People: The welfare state, the "underclass," and urban schools as history, p. 100. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.

In this study, we have shown that when ordinary people enter into the education arena their efforts result in meaningful gains for students who have not been well-served by the public schools. Ordinary people can indeed begin to transform the institution of public education to make it more equitable and responsive.



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